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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LANGUAGE AND HEIDEGGER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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by

EGON BORK

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Language and Heidegger, submitted by Egon Bork in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis we attempt to attain the reorientation towards language to which the philosophy of Martin Heidegger invites us. Immediately following the brief introductory remarks (#1), what may be considered to be the main theme of the first half of the thesis (up to and including #11) is explicitly stated: Are our conventional conceptions of language sufficient? (#2). After some general methodological considerations (#3, 4), brief preparatory remarks (#5) introduce the examination of commonly accepted approaches to language (#6 - #10). The primary aim of this examination is to expose the assumptions and limitations of these approaches, and to point into the common ground from which these assumptions and their insufficiencies emerge (#11).

The examination of our conventional conceptions of and approaches to language leads to the recognition that language, far from being merely functional, is constitutive for man's existence. Thus, the question concerning language ceases to be a particular, a specifically linguistic problem, and merges into the question concerning the existence (being) of man (#12).

How does language constitute the existence of man?



CHAPTER I

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the subject. It begins with a brief account of the early attempts to explain the origin of life, and then proceeds to a more detailed examination of the various theories which have been advanced. The author discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and points out the difficulties which attend the acceptance of any one of them. He then turns to the question of the development of life, and shows how the various forms of life have arisen from a common ancestor. The second part of the book is devoted to a more detailed examination of the various theories which have been advanced. The author discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and points out the difficulties which attend the acceptance of any one of them. He then turns to the question of the development of life, and shows how the various forms of life have arisen from a common ancestor.

The third part of the book is devoted to a more detailed examination of the various theories which have been advanced. The author discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and points out the difficulties which attend the acceptance of any one of them. He then turns to the question of the development of life, and shows how the various forms of life have arisen from a common ancestor. The fourth part of the book is devoted to a more detailed examination of the various theories which have been advanced. The author discusses the evidence in support of each theory, and points out the difficulties which attend the acceptance of any one of them. He then turns to the question of the development of life, and shows how the various forms of life have arisen from a common ancestor.

Turning to an exceptional work of language for orientation and guidance (#13), we acknowledge that language discloses being (#14) in accordance with the response to its demand (#15).

Our aim is to urge that because of the inherent limitations of our prevailing preconceptions, a fundamental re-orientation is demanded. This thesis is designed in accordance with this aim. We conceive that only to the extent that this demand can be shown to exist, or rather: only to the extent that the existence of this demand is experienced in its urgency, can Heidegger's writings attain an inviting significance for a reader, an inviting significance quite distinct from that of a novel theory or method. Thus, when we refer extensively to Heidegger's various writings--and at times these references may simply be suggestive--this is not done with the presumptuous intention to "sum up, simplify and explain Heidegger".





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## #1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis will be concerned with Heidegger's account of language. It may be appropriate to point out at the beginning what major difficulties this attempt is bound to encounter.

Heidegger's account of language is not separable as an addition to, as a sideline or a mere aspect of his "general" philosophy. Although Heidegger has published a series of talks and essays regarding language in a separate volume entitled Unterwegs zur Sprache, these talks and essays may themselves best be seen in the context of his other works.

As the title Unterwegs zur Sprache explicitly indicates, Heidegger does not assume to provide a final explanation or a definition of language, just as he does not intend to provide either explanation or definition of "being".

Our attempt to present Heidegger's account of language is a twofold interpretation and should as such be objective in a twofold sense.

Firstly, it is an interpretation from the German into the English language. However, is an objective translation from one language into another always possible? It may depend on what language is.





Secondly, an "objective" interpretation presupposes not only access to the same phenomenon but also the same response to the same phenomenon. Any interpretation can be accurate only to the degree to which it witnesses the same phenomenon in the same way. Access and mode of response to the same phenomenon, however, may not necessarily be a function of the reader's or interpreter's interest, ambition, diligence, or education.

It hardly needs to be mentioned that Heidegger does not write in ordinary German. But may we then expect or demand a presentation in ordinary English? Both writer and interpreter stand under the obligation to attempt to do justice to the phenomenon. If the phenomenon were unfamiliar, would this necessitate and justify an unfamiliar although maybe simple language?

Already we have touched upon several questions regarding language: Why is Heidegger's account of language not separable from the "rest" of his philosophy? Are the questioning approach to language and the question of being related? Must we always remain on the way to language, or even be content to prepare its way? What is the relation between phenomena and language? Is there a foolproof language with which everything can be said and which is yet not the language of fools?

These questions point well into the theme of this thesis.



#2. ARE OUR CONVENTIONAL CONCEPTIONS  
OF LANGUAGE SUFFICIENT?

Any particular concern of language is guided, explicitly or implicitly, by an a priori apprehension of language. What then is language? According to Heidegger, language cannot be essentially explained or understood in terms of expression<sup>1</sup>, or as a means for communication or information<sup>2</sup>. According to Heidegger, words are essentially not symbols or metaphors<sup>3</sup>, nor signs<sup>4</sup> which designate things or emotions, nor the conveyors or containers of meanings<sup>5</sup>. Language is essentially not a tool<sup>6</sup> at a person's disposal. Language is essentially not one among the properties of man<sup>7</sup>, just as speaking

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1959), pp. 190, 228, 229; Martin Heidegger, Unterwegs zur Sprache (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1965), pp. 14, 19, 20, 129, 130, 204.

<sup>2</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Hebel, der Hausfreund (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1965), pp. 27, 28; Martin Heidegger, Der Satz vom Grund (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1965), p. 203.

<sup>3</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, pp. 88, 89.

<sup>4</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit. Mit einem Brief ueber den "Humanismus" (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1954), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Was heisst Denken? (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1961), p. 88; Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 156.

<sup>6</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 11 ff.





is not one among man's numerous abilities<sup>8</sup>. In a strict sense, Heidegger holds, we cannot even speak "about" language<sup>9</sup>.

Where does this leave us? Are not all our conceptions, preconceptions and notions of language rejected? What else could language be? How can anybody possibly deny that language is expression and as such serves as a means for communication?

To avoid misunderstanding we will provisionally draw out what has only been indicated above. Our conventional notions of language are not rejected as false or useless but are said to be inessential and non-sufficient. The fact that language is generally and increasingly taken as a means, for instance of communication, is in no way overlooked or ignored<sup>10</sup>. Yet, an inessential conception need not be false, it may indeed in a sense be correct. The worst thing about certain statements, expressions, definitions, explanations, or theories may be that they are not even sufficiently false--whereupon they appear as conclusive and exclusive. Analogously, our conventional conceptions of language need not be false and may yield useful results<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, if such terms

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<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 79; Heidegger, Sprache, p. 241.

<sup>9</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 147 - 152, 160.

<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Hebel, pp. 26 - 28; Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, pp. 32, 33, 203; Heidegger, Sprache, p. 160.

<sup>11</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 15, 16, 160, 161.



as "meaning", "expression", "communication" were not taken as terminal explanations but were inquired into, maybe they would appear in their insufficiency and point well beyond themselves. Such an inquiry is the aim of the following considerations (#3 - #11) which are largely methodological in character.





### #3. A FLOWER IS ...

What is a flower? Shall we accept the account of a physicist, a physiologist, a biochemist, an aesthetician, a florist, a farmer, or a bride? Is a flower an electrical current in the brain, a sensation on the retina, a configuration of matter, an object of trade, or an "emotional" experience? Which view is the correct one, or the best one? May we be content to be scientifically minded or business minded during working hours and aesthetically minded after hours<sup>1</sup>? Are these different views compatible or what does this dichotomy or rather multi-chotomy indicate?

The physical description is the presently most favoured, partly because other sciences such as chemistry, biology, or physiology appear to be reducible to physics, partly because the method of classical physics--if not its success--has been the model for the so-called social sciences. Let us therefore briefly consider the physical explanation of a flower.

According to this view, a flower is explained as a configuration of elementary particles. About 30 elementary

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, pp. 17ff.



particles are known of which three, namely protons, neutrons and electrons, are the most stable<sup>2</sup>. Theoretically, 1 cc. of pure protons would weigh approximately 300 million tons<sup>3</sup>. Since 1 cc. of flower weighs considerably less, we have become used to account for the difference in terms of emptiness. Indeed, the ratio of matter to emptiness is smaller in the case of an atom than it is in the case of our planetary system.

However, this explanatory model that compares the structure of an atom with a planetary system ignores the changes which have occurred in physics since the beginning of this century<sup>4</sup>.

Classical physicists had thought it in principle possible and had aimed to observe and describe the determined behaviour of particles in space and time objectively<sup>5</sup>, that is, without interference by the observer. But in modern nuclear physics no clear distinction between subject and object

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<sup>2</sup>cf., Werner Heisenberg, Wandlungen in den Grundlagen der Naturwissenschaft (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, neunte erweiterte Auflage, 1959), pp. 153, 174.

<sup>3</sup>cf., Lejaren A. Hiller, Jr. and Rolfe H. Herber, Principles of Chemistry (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 10ff.

<sup>4</sup>Heisenberg, Wandlungen, pp. 28, 149.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 57, 95, 127, 139.



is possible<sup>6</sup> since the effect of the observation on the observed can neither be eliminated nor isolated<sup>7</sup>. Whereas classical physics reduced the so-called secondary qualities such as colour and taste to primary geometrical ones, modern nuclear physics has reduced secondary as well as the primary geometrical qualities to complicated multidimensional differential equations<sup>8</sup>. Modern nuclear physics has no longer geometrical structures underlying its formula, and thus no visually distinct objective conception of the elementary particles<sup>9</sup>. Its description of nature is an abstract mathematical analytical one<sup>10</sup>.

The belief that there are pieces of matter in the space and time of our ordinary conception, which can be objectively observed, is an idealization of nature<sup>11</sup>. Heisenberg has even said<sup>12</sup> that it is difficult to decide whether the general presuppositions of any attempted general physical

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 36, 37, 40, 73, 102, 103, 169.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 22, 23, 80, 151, 157, 181.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 23, 98, 101, 119.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 81, 85, 86, 165.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 66, 113, 127.

<sup>12</sup>Werner Heisenberg, "Grundlegende Voraussetzungen in der Physik der Elementarteilchen", Martin Heidegger zum Siebzigsten Geburtstag. Festschrift (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1959), p. 291.





formula contain assertions about the empirical state of the world, about our ways of thought or about language. We may thus expect that the physical explanation of our flower, once achieved or approximated, will be an abstract, speculative, mathematical world formula.

The gulf between our immediate natural surroundings and their physical explanation has constantly increased with the progress of science, and seems today irreconcilable. This can be shown to a disturbing degree by another example<sup>13</sup>:

The phenomenon of light has been reduced by physics to waves of electromagnetic radiation for whose behaviour the adequate mathematical description was provided by Maxwell's equations. We cannot deny that these equations are correct. They work, they are useful. They can be learned, understood, taught and employed--even by a naturally blind person. Indeed, we can say, the scientific explanation of light neither presupposes nor furthers our immediate experience of light. The naturally blind man could have detected and explained light by other than visual means, just as we have detected and made use of non-visible forms of radiation.

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<sup>13</sup>Heisenberg, Wandlungen, pp. 20, 88, 89.



#### #4. THE APPROACH DETERMINES

We asked: What is a flower? We saw that a wide range of answers is possible, depending upon our particular interests or viewpoints.

This fundamental difficulty only repeats itself when we now ask: What is language? When we set out to explain language, shall we begin with the biological development of the body, or the historical development of the spirit, or of the consciousness? Shall we assume that language was given to man by God, shall we study etymology or the conventional use of words? Is language most adequately presented by ordinary language, drama, or poetry? Shall we investigate the physiology of the vocal organs and their use, the sound, the voice, the brain, or the meaning of words? Is language a functional tool at man's disposal? Is it advisable to explain language in terms of thought, the spoken word, or the written word; in terms of judgment, sentence, or statement; or more specifically: in terms of concept, grammar, syntax, logic, or symbolic logic?

Whatever decision we make, or even avoid to make, whatever aspect of language we initially prefer, explicitly or implicitly, we know it will determine the result of our





investigation. There is no approach without presuppositions, although we may avoid or ignore to draw them out. Without these initial suppositions there would be no object of inquiry. Each approach has certain intentions and expectations<sup>1</sup>. Each approach is in a sense a pro-jection, a pro-ject. As we have seen, this has become very evident in the paradigm case of all scientific investigations, in physics. Here, the effect of the observer on the observed can no longer be ignored<sup>2</sup>. It demands not merely a new improved theory but new assumptions, not merely new concepts but a new concept<sup>3</sup>, of which any subsequent theory can only be a function.

Each pro-ject is based in a context which may be far from known. This context provides the preliminary understanding or familiarity of the object to be investigated<sup>4</sup>. An approach may be guided by a preliminary understanding that is self-evident to a whole epoch.

Each approach is determining. It determines the range of phenomena that come into view<sup>5</sup> and HOW they come into view. It determines the range of phenomena that do not come into

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>cf. Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 45, 46, 71, 169.

<sup>4</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1963), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 103.



view, that are excluded because of THIS approach. It determines the concepts, methods, experiments that may be meaningfully employed. It determines the questions and problems that can and cannot occur within the context it creates<sup>6</sup>.

Each approach is determining. It is thus of utmost importance that we are as thoughtful and circumspective as possible before we commit ourselves to any one approach, and that after we have committed ourselves we remain aware of the assumptions and limitations of this approach. It is simply irresponsible to set out on any one approach because this seems to be the thing to do, or looks, feels, and sounds all right, and then to proclaim the results of the investigation to be relevant or binding.

What has been said in the last paragraph may appear to be so self-evident and so basic that it should not even be mentioned here. Indeed, it is basic. But is it therefore so rudimentary that we, because of our alleged advanced position, are categorically exempt from and secure without these concerns? Do not most "errors" occur at this base? We will intend to show later that some philosophical investigations would most likely not be carried out if the assumptions upon which they are based were sufficiently observed.

Basically new approaches occur seldom. Usually, approaches which may have been projected generations ago, are

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<sup>6</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 59; Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 362ff.



just carried on and carried through. Because of this distance between pro-jection and its execution, the assumptions and the concept of the initial project must constantly be secured from oblivion. Without this watch, even such a general approach as science is not excluded from the possibility of becoming a superstition.

We shall now consider two objections which may be held against what has been said so far in this section.

(1)

Does not the success of an approach, in spite of all the initial uncertainty guaranty that this approach is sound and valid? By no means. The success of a science, for instance, is as such no indication that anything essential has been explained or understood or even come into view and touched upon<sup>7</sup>. The mathematical conception of nature<sup>8</sup> as "masspoints" in space and time and the SUBSEQUENT mathematical formulation of natural regularities has permitted us to master and control many things for our benefit. However, if we succeed to rule over and control X, does it follow that we have understood X?

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<sup>7</sup>Cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaetze, p. 63.

<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 362; Martin Heidegger, Die Frage nach dem Ding (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1962), pp. 69 - 73.





If we succeed in manipulating and subjugating a person, does it follow that we have understood this person? Could not this urge to control be the best indication that we are not in the least concerned to understand, to acknowledge, to do justice to, but that we are out to make use of, if not to exploit, for our own purpose?

Have we not committed a fallacy in our argument? From the control of things we "jumped" to the manipulation of a person. Of course, if we succeed in subjugating a person it does not follow that we have understood and done justice to him. But what does this have to do with things? Have things to be understood? How can we do justice to things?

"Thing" meant at one time "judicial assembly". We also say, "we cannot stand things". Have things to be stood? Do things have to be stood to be under-stood--in order to stand? What is then the turn-over of things but a misunderstanding? Where does this leave our rational understanding of reason and understanding?

Is this a playing with words, or is the English language richer than our ordinary preconceptions--and the analytic inquiries that execute them--are prepared to admit? Maybe language is not simply a tool, but is also worth listening to!

Whether or not we were invalid when we to some extent equated the control of things and the manipulation of persons will depend on the mode of existence (Seinsart) of things.



What mode of existence is that of a flower? Is the trail to the homestead bordered with flowers? Is the flower an object of sale, decoration, or aesthetic appreciation? Has the flower fallen into use-lessness and just sits there? Or does the flower - stand by itself? William Shakespeare says in the 94th sonnet:

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself, it only live and die.

What mode of existence is appropriate to language<sup>9</sup>? Is language a thing at all or does a comparison with the modes of existence of a flower fall short?

What if there were no subject without a world, if subject and world were not categorically distinct--as already to some extent indicated by modern nuclear physics--: and the mode of existence of man was the mode of existence of things? Then the rational-materialistic view of nature could have its source in a certain mode of (man's) being<sup>10</sup>.

Is the flower justified and grounded as it stands, or is it justified and grounded in sufficient reason? Can reason provide ground?

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<sup>9</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 166.

<sup>10</sup>cf., Ibid., pp. 362, 363.





(2)

Granted the uncertainty and problematic of each individual approach, would not the sum total of all possible approaches--each one representing one aspect--lead to a rounded, comprehensive view? This may involve us in considerable search and re-search, but would an encompassing knowledge not be guaranteed in this way?

It would be rather improbable, it would in fact be very unlikely, that all possible approaches were included in this total effort. Even the only out-standing approach could be the essential one.

Again and again we insist on the essential approach. What if there simply is no such essential approach? What if one aspect is as good as another? Then one result will also be as good as the other; the total effort will only confirm this. Then we have reached relativism and not a comprehensive view<sup>11</sup>.

So let us suppose the essential approach is included in the total effort which is to yield a rounded, comprehensive view. How would we know which one is the essential approach? This is of crucial importance. It would be an illusion to assume that the different results from the different approaches

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<sup>11</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 250.



will simply fall into place by themselves. They will have to be brought into place. However, this presupposes a conception. Now, either we have a pre-conception which is guided by the knowledge of the essential approach or we have none. If we have none, we have once more fallen into relativism; the inclusion of the essential but as such unknown approach can not alter this. However, if we do have an essential pre-conception to place the results of the total effort, the total effort was unnecessary. The essential pre-conception could have guided one initial essential approach.

Have we not again committed a fallacy? We demand prior to the commencement of any inquiry an essential pre-conception. This means, we insist that prior to the investigation a guiding understanding of what is to be investigated must be available. Is our argument not circular?

It is, but only to a degree. If we are to search, we must have a certain conception of what we are searching for. This pre-conception need not be elucidated but it must be guiding, just as a star guides a ship. Any directed concern is thus guided. This guidance, far from being a limitation or contradiction, orientates. "It is deciding not to step out of the circle but to enter the circle appropriately"<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup>Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 153. Cf., also: Ibid., pp. 7, 8, 152, 314 - 316; Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 150f.; Martin Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik (Tuebingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1966), pp. 24f.



Could one essential conception not gradually evolve as we proceed carefully and circumspectively along our provisional separate approaches? Surely, we cannot anticipate the results of all these separate approaches, and the possibilities they may in turn provide, by sheer logical theoretical analysis of their assumptions.

Are we merely theoretical? We must admit, as things stand now--or rather: since things are not stood but used and overturned--we must admit, as things are long since falling into bits and pieces, there seems little justification for this sort of "faith in a positive fatalism". Our immediate understanding familiarity of a flower, for instance, and the physical understanding of this "same" flower appear further apart and less reconcilable than ever<sup>13</sup>. We do not merely lack any guideline to place these different approaches in any relation or order of interdependence as either peripheral or central, these different approaches seem to be not even compatible.

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<sup>13</sup>cf., Heidegger, Hebel, p. 23.





## #5. REDUCTION AND TERMINI

How can we approach language? Will our methodological concern inhibit us forever to get off the ground? On the other hand, it would be a dubious advantage to leave the ground simply to reach a correct explanation of language comparable to the naturally blind man's correct explanation of light.

Regardless of whether we attempted to explain or to indicate the possible approaches to a flower, to light, or to language, in each case did we aim to reduce the phenomenon to basic terms of explanation. We shall therefore call this general approach to a phenomenon "the reductive method" or simply "reduction".

Any reduction aims at finding adequate essential terms of explanation. These terms of explanation are of course only adequate when they themselves are unambiguous and do themselves not demand explanation. Only when no further reduction beyond these terms of explanation is necessary, can they suffice. We shall therefore call these terminal terms of explanation "termini of explanation" or simply "termini".

In any reductive attempt to say what language is, language is reduced to certain termini. We may note that a



reduction of phenomena to termini may aim to explain the phenomena either as or by means of particular termini. We will now look more closely at some of these termini and question:

- a) In how far do these termini explain or describe language essentially?
- b) Do these termini suffice as terminal explanations?

We will be concerned with the following commonly suggested termini: Man's biological development (#6), convention, learning, and physiology (#7), ordinary language (#8), the formal aspects of language (#9), and language as a means (#10).

In order not to overstate our case and not to raise expectations which we cannot or do not intend to fulfil, we would like to caution:

As said previously, we do not aim at showing that these termini are incorrect or useless, but to question whether they are adequate.

This thesis has a certain concern. Primarily it is concerned with Heidegger's account of language. The thesis must thus be composed in such a way that it can accommodate as much as possible from Heidegger's writings and at the same time lead the reader into Heidegger's writings rather than confront him with untranslatable terms or with forcefully translated and selected excerpts.





The selection of the termini is in accord with the primary concern of this thesis. The selection of questions asked with regard to each terminus are also to further this primary intention. To what extent the here selected termini are inadequate as termini, should become more and more evident as the thesis progresses.



## #6. MAN'S BIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AS A TERMINUS OF LANGUAGE

The attempt to explain language in terms of man's biologically understood development is common. Since "development" may here mean "evolution" or "growth", language may be explained primarily in terms of either the evolution of mankind or the growth of the individual since infancy. We will briefly state two examples of such a reduction, and then consider its tenability.

### (1)

According to Ernst Fischer<sup>1</sup> the nature of language may be understood as a form of mediated metabolism. Whereas every biological organism is in a state of non-mediated metabolism with the surrounding world, with the pre-human being emerged a development towards the use of tools, towards human work, in short: towards mediated metabolism<sup>2</sup>. Over spontaneous experimentation<sup>3</sup>, over the use of natural objects as occasional

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<sup>1</sup> The following two paragraphs are based on: Ernst Fischer, The Necessity of Art. A Marxist Approach, translated by Anna Bostock (Pelican Books, 1963), Chapter Two, The Origins of Art, pp. 15 - 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 20.



tools<sup>4</sup>, over trial and error<sup>5</sup>, the development led to the production of tools with a preconceived purpose<sup>6</sup>.

"Language came into being together with tools"<sup>7</sup>. Prehistoric man 'abstracted' from certain tools of the same kind the quality common to them all<sup>8</sup>. Subsequently, signs "evolved to cover . . . all objects and living beings of the same kind"<sup>9</sup>. The raw material for this language were primitive signals, mating cries, and cries of fear<sup>10</sup>. "A means of expression--a gesture, an image, a sound, or a word--was as much a tool as a hand-axe or a knife. It was only another way of establishing man's power over nature"<sup>11</sup>.

(2)

According to Guenther Patzig<sup>12</sup>, we must attempt to

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>The following paragraphs are based on: Guenther Patzig, "Die Sprache, philosophisch befragt", Sonderdruck aus: Die deutsche Sprache im 20. Jahrhundert (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).





understand language "as a gradual development and refinement of originally simple and pragmatic (zweckverhafteter) beginnings"<sup>13</sup>. He summarizes his position as follows:

What conception of language did we project? We saw that language can be understood as a system of normative habits of speech by individuals who belong to a linguistic community. As the origin (Wurzelgrund) of language we designated the signal function, which is the appropriate function in the context of practical human life. Thus we take no offence in looking for the origin of language in that area into which the biological context (Zweckzusammenhaenge) points. However, this does not imply that language, like a precious instrument, could not during a long development attract the attention, outgrow these contexts and unfold its own essence (Wesen) obligingly.<sup>14</sup>

Into what area does the biological context point? As mentioned previously, it is the area of the evolution of mankind as well as individual growth. The first aspect is mentioned only briefly:

Simple counting develops into the wonderful structure of modern mathematics, the primitive behaviour norms of the group of hunters and collectors unfold into the scale of values (Wertetafel) of the great civilizations (Hochkulturen), vocal signals develop into systems of language by means of which everything can be said, at best in formulations that please the sense for beauty.<sup>15</sup>

The second aspect is considered more elaborately:

The crying of the child is at first a spontaneous expression of discomfort, usually of hunger. However, when the mother regularly attends to remove

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



this discontentment, an association (Ueberlagerung) is formed: the cry is deliberately employed as a signal . . . . The origin of language is the awareness that<sup>16</sup> acoustic signals may have pleasing consequences.

Around the sixth week of an infant's life begins the<sup>17</sup> playful formation of sounds, the so-called babbling.

The tedious and never ending process of learning may now proceed.

### (3)

Both examples are concerned with the origins of language. The origins of language are said to be mediated metabolism, mating cries, expressions of discomfort, infant babbling, etc. The exact number or location of these termini need not concern us, nor whether the reduction is more adequately executed in a simple or a complex-dialectical fashion.

In what sense are these suggested termini "origins" of language? They are origins in the sense of first primitive beginnings. It is assumed that language originated within the immature.

How is language, as it is now, related to these its first beginnings? Is it self-evident that language, as it is now, is essentially explicable in terms of its primitive or immature beginnings? When it is said that man "developed"

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 19.





from the animal, does this explain what man is--or what the animal is? If the kiss "developed" from feeding, does this explain Judas' kiss? What is the significance of citing "historical" developments which then do not essentially explain the so-called present product of this "development"? What actually is that particular entity which allegedly "develops"?<sup>18</sup>

However, did not our second example explicitly state that language may outgrow its origin, the biological functional context, "and unfold its own essence obligingly"?<sup>19</sup> Indeed, this is a clear admittance that origin and essence may not coincide, although it remains a puzzle how from language as a biological function its OWN essence can emerge and what this essence may be. Where did this essence idle so far? And can we call that which idled an essence? Either language brought forth its very own essence, and then language should at all times in its "development" be understood in terms of this essence, or language received (how?) a new essence, and then all previous terms of explanation are in-essential. We may conclude that since any account of language should be concerned with its essence rather than its precedents, and to the extent that language can admittedly outgrow the functional context

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<sup>18</sup>cf., S. A. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments, trans. David Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 307.

<sup>19</sup>Patzig, Sprache, p. 26.



and unfold its own essence, Patzig's reference to first beginnings becomes inessential.

When the primitive or immature beginnings of language are suggested as meaningful termini of explanation, it is assumed that the essence of language is but a continuation, an extension, or an enlargement of these beginnings. Since such an assumption is by no means self-evident, yet very commonly made, simply made, we must ask where it could have originated. Under what circumstances would it be tenable to explain language in terms of first beginnings? Under the conditions that world and life are mechanistically determined.

This materialistic-mechanical conception was believed to be supported and justified by the results and success of the paradigm science, physics. In the meantime, physics can no longer support this project. Heisenberg writes:<sup>20</sup>

In a certain way, that time (second half of the nineteenth century)<sup>21</sup> had a uniform scientific world view: the world consisted of objects in space. These objects changed in time through effects and counter-effects according to laws. Change took place because of the objects' movement in space, or because of an inner movement of some parts, and because of an alteration of material qualities (colour, temperature, resistance), whereby this alteration of qualities could maybe in turn be reduced to movements of smallest particles, atoms. One may call this world view an idealization of reality. Space and time are seen as independently arranged schemata (unabhaengige Ordnungsschemata), into which all events are projected as

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<sup>20</sup>Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 113.

<sup>21</sup>My italics.



something objectively occurring. Precisely this is the idealization upon which the Newtonian mechanics are based. And after all mechanics was the methodological model of all the natural sciences.

But even if we considered mechanical-materialistic determinism on its own terms, it is far from self-explanatory:

The determinist would not necessarily hold that the first beginnings of language alone would fully account for language. Instead, he would consider the first beginnings as necessary reasons which may be determining but which, if a complete explanation of language is to be provided, need supplementation by other necessary reasons. In other words, the sum total of necessary reasons IS the sufficient comprehensive reason.

The determinist presupposes that each effect is in principle entirely accountable for by its cause(s). It follows: The sum total of causes must be equal to the sum total of effects--throughout all time.

According to this conception, man is the sum total of certain effects, nothing else. Prior to the existence of man, the various causes that contributed to his later existence were still scattered and thus could not amount to man. Only later, when they congregated at certain junctions of space and times, was their effect--man.







We now want to draw the attention to one crucial point in the argument. The assertion is and must be that each effect is in principle fully explicable by its cause(s)--throughout all time. The existence of man as a set of effects at  $t_2$  must thus be fully explicable by a corresponding arrangement of causes which however, at  $t_1$ , did not amount to existence. The crucial question is: Is the existence of man as a set of effects indeed fully explained by causes which do themselves not amount to existence? Are we not utterly deluded when we speak here of "full explanation"? The determinist's "explanation" presupposes that man in his own existence is in principle the same as what-was without existence.

Is the existence of man reducible, i.e. fully explained, by so-called facts? This question, or such an affirmation, is absurd since it presupposes absolute objectivity in objective space and objective time. It is absurd since any "fact" presupposes the existence of man. There is no objectivity without a subject<sup>22</sup>. An object is thrown against and thus dependent on a subject. Objectivity is a metaphysical subjective attitude (see #10, 11). A consequent empiricism is in principle impossible--as we will once more indicate later (#7 (3)).

If any effect was indeed fully accountable for by its cause(s), if man in his existence taken as a congregation of

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<sup>22</sup>cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 258.



effects was indeed fully accountable for by a corresponding assembly of causes, then man should have been this assembly of causes. As soon as the explanation were complete, this should follow. If it does not follow, something must have gone wrong with the explanation.

Furthermore, if any effect was indeed fully accountable for by its cause(s), and since the causes reach back and the effects reach out indefinitely according to the same principle, we should be able to infer a total absurdity which we could call "the materialistic-mechanical proof of bilateral immortality": man always has been and always will be.



## #7. CONVENTION, LEARNING, AND PHYSIOLOGY AS TERMINI

### 1. Convention

The accounts concerned with the first beginnings of language already referred to the importance of convention and learning.

It is sometimes held: "A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates".<sup>1</sup>

"Sym-bol" implies "gathering" and "holding together". How can such gathering be arbitrary?

What is meant is that vocal sounds as signs de-signate "objects and living beings".<sup>2</sup> These vocal signs, and as such signals, then "develop into systems of language by means of which everything can be said, at best in formulations that please the sense for beauty".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager, "Outline of Linguistic Analysis", Linguistic Society of America Publications (Baltimore, 1942), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Fischer, Necessity of Art, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Patzig, Sprache, p. 26.





A language, however, does not merely consist of signs designating objects and living beings, not even if we considered all nouns as signs of objects. A multitude of symbols is not yet a system. There are relations, qualities, quantities, modalities. These "general relations" are said to constitute the system of the, as such, arbitrary symbols which designate all things. The definition does not speak of an arbitrary system of symbols but of a system of arbitrary symbols. Similarly, different languages are not different systems of arbitrary symbols but systems of different symbols, once arbitrary, now conventional. Not the system is arbitrary or conventional but the symbols. At least, only to the extent that this is assumed, can the results of semantical investigations have validity beyond one particular language.

In this reduction, too, the ideal seems to be to exclude any possible relevancy of the existence of man as such to the definition of language. This reduction, too, aims at the ideal of a mechanical-materialistic world view, according to which the tabula rasa mind mirrors objectivity. For this reason, the fundamental terminus of language is said to be the arbitrary sign or symbol. Yet, the more this reductive theory wants to account for, the more it is being forced from the ideal:

The fundamental terminus is said to be the symbol, because the existence of man is thus most negligible: As



Fischer states:<sup>4</sup> ". . . prehistoric man 'abstracted' from many individual hand-axes the quality common to them all-- that of being a hand-axe; in so doing, he formed the 'concept' of a hand-axe. He did not know he was doing it. But he was nevertheless creating a concept."

An accumulation of concepts, however, is not a language. There are "relations". Yet, the introduction of "relations" grants man more "substance", contrary to the initial intention. "Relations" such as qualities (for instance: negation) or modality (for instance: possibility) are not objectively there as such. Even spatial distances between mass-points, or temporal distances between event points are not there as such.

"Distant" is what stands apart. Without existence there would be no view-point for distance, no gathering for what stands apart. The existence of man is the residence (Ort) for these "relations". Furthermore, whether "meaning", prior to learned convention, is reducible to the "relation" of signs for objects and living beings, is far from self-evident.

Yet, this attempt to reconstruct language theoretically from symbols must further admit that language is not merely the horizontally related accumulation of concepts

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<sup>4</sup>Fischer, Necessity of Art, p. 28.



either. Even if we ignored what the occurrence of man's "stating" of related symbols as such implies, we must acknowledge, for instance, that there are the tenses of language, or that there is the modus of questioning in language. Herewith, the observer's externally stimulated view-point which was granted man as the locus for the establishment of horizontal "relations", is definitely no longer sufficient. The fact that there are tenses in language, the fact that there is the modus of questioning in language forces upon us certain implications as to the existence of man. How must man exist before he can speak in tenses, or question? Can man "state" before he can speak in tenses, or question? Can man "state", bring to a stand, without standing himself? An animal cannot state. Can man speak in tenses, say "is", state "is", without being, without the occurrence of existence to itself, without "identity"?<sup>5</sup> An animal "is" not. Shall we seek for the origin of language somewhere in the primitive, in the penumbra between animal and man, or does the origin of language rest with the being of man, with the up-flaring and rising of world?

However, the mechanical preconception does not question how man without "identity"--or even without a state of latent identity as presupposed in the "inversion of the natural consciousness" in Hegel's Phaenomenologie des Geistes--could

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<sup>5</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Identitaet und Differenz (Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske, 1957), pp. 13 - 34, esp. pp. 14f.





have been capable of human signs and symbols, and the expression of relations. Consequently, the tenses are referred back to and "explained" as relations; the word "is", for instance, is levelled to the status of copula. Although we may wonder what it does connect when we say "I am" or "the flower is".

At times, we look for the right word, maybe even for the right sentence, maybe even for clarity, maybe even for more. What does this search indicate? If language were convention, why should we search beyond convention, i.e. language, and how COULD we do so?

When we strive for the right words, maybe for what has not been said before, what does "right" here refer to? How can we know at first sight that words which previously were not, which do not have the alibi of established conventional usage, are the "right" words? Are they "right" because they fit into and maybe enlarge the system of conventional symbols? But how do and CAN we know that they fit in? We just transferred the difficulty from "right" to "fit", from word to word.

If convention does not exclude the "creation" of right, unconventional, essential words, why should it exclude essential, unconventional speech or writings? Again we are forced to admit that the suggested terminus of language and the essence of language do not coincide.

The definition further mentions that the social group



cooperates by means of language. Who would want to deny this? Yet, is this, as alleged, an essential part of an explanation of language? Kierkegaard says:<sup>6</sup>

Think of an author; to him it never occurs to question whether he will obtain a reader or whether he will accomplish anything by his book; he is only intent upon apprehending the truth.

Is the author's concern not the cooperation of the group? It remains to be asked what this cooperation is. Is it the functional movement of social entities in a biological context which at best also satisfies a sense for science, aesthetics and economy? A sincere enquire into what social relations essentially are, also could lead to an essential concern with language.

## 2. Learning

Arbitrary symbols are learned by a social group; this makes them conventions.

According to the ideal of mechanical materialism, man is at first a tabula rasa, a blank wax tablet, or, in more recent terms, an empty organism.<sup>7</sup> Man is a reaction. According to this ideal, learning is explained on the stimulus-

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<sup>6</sup>S. A. Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Vol. 2, trans. Walter Lowrie (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), p. 301.

<sup>7</sup>Gordon W. Allport, Becoming. Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 15.



response model which ideally is the psychological equivalent to the physical cause and effect model already discussed. Again, the existence of man as such is at this point most negligible: Fischer's prehistoric man did not know what he was doing when he created the first concepts;<sup>8</sup> psychologists assume species equivalence.<sup>9</sup> This theory, however, is also forced to "swerve" from its ideal, once it wants to explain more. Such concepts as internal stimulation, expectancy, cognitive maps, of "mental set" may be seen as such divergencies.<sup>10</sup> We may also wonder how such alleged terminal "explanations" as "playful babbling" or "trial and error" could be accounted for on the stimulus-response model.

We will now test this model at the phenomenon of hearing. Hearing is said to happen when an outer stimulus is transmitted via the outer, middle and inner ear to the brain, while hereby being transformed from the form of sound waves to vibrations and finally to electrochemical changes. Yet, while these changes are going on, we may still not hear.<sup>11</sup> We may be asleep, day dreaming, absent-minded, pre-occupied, inattentive, concentrated, in short: we may not be--listening.

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<sup>8</sup>Fischer, Necessity of Art, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup>Allport, Becoming, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 7 - 17.

<sup>11</sup>cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, pp. 213ff.





What happens when we are listening? Let us say we are listening, and do not hear a thing. How shall we account for listening, since there is no stimulus to start us out on a mechanical sequence?

We harken, but there is silence. Yet, how can silence be? Is not silence the absence of sound-waves, the vacuum between sounds?<sup>12</sup> How can what-is-not be? And yet, we do not hear nor understand without listening.

We harken into the silence, into the distance. But whereto? Is silence a space? Is not space the vacuum between mass-points?

We harken into the silence and are silenced. We quieten. Time stands: still. Is time presence? Why does "present" (prae - esse) refer to being? Why are we not satisfied with our system of conventional symbols according to which time is the vacuous distance between event-points?

Without listening we could not understand. Without listening we would not learn. Without listening we could not speak a language.

One may object that indeed some deaf people do learn a language. But do these people not also listen to their teacher in order to learn? Again, one may object that we

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<sup>12</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 29f.



are now using the word "listen" metaphorically or figuratively. But do we? Did we not fail to explain hearing and listening physiologically? Thus, we are no longer justified to imagine that we had derived the "figure" or "metaphor" from its proper, biologically understood sphere of sensations, and had then transferred and applied it to a secondary sphere, for instance to the sphere of imagination or emotions. Such a categorical a priori distinction is a metaphysical one.<sup>13</sup> We do not speak metaphorically nor contradictory when we say that Beethoven's ear must have been most sensitive when he wrote the ninth symphony, although he was deaf.<sup>14</sup>

The hearing and the speaking of a language are related.<sup>15</sup> "Hearing is constitutive for speaking."<sup>16</sup> In order to speak, we have to listen. Yet, listen to what and where-to?

Since we failed to explain hearing in terms of sound-waves, we will also fail to explain language in terms of phonetics. When we listen to what is said, we do not first hear sounds which are later furnished with connotations or meanings,

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<sup>13</sup> cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, pp. 88f.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>15</sup> cf., Martin Heidegger, Erlaeuterungen zu Hoelderlins Dichtung (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1963), p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 163.



nor do we first hear single words which are later compiled into word structures. When we listen to what is said, we listen to what is said. The single words do not stand out as such from what is said. The mere sound is not the substratum of what is said, it is an abstraction. It takes some effort on the part of the listener to hear mere sounds, an effort which moreover distracts from listening to what is said. Indeed, it may be questionable whether we ever fully succeed in hearing mere sounds; even a word not understood or a nonsensical word is not yet a mere sound.<sup>17</sup>

Since we failed to explain hearing on a stimulus-response basis, we cannot succeed to account for learning in these terms either. Thus, learning cannot be the accumulation, appraisal and possible coordination of sense data into a functional and maybe even rational and profitable system. Thus, the materialistic conception of learning cannot be a tenable terminus.

### 3. Physiology<sup>18</sup>

We failed to reduce hearing to physiological change because the stimulus-response model did not accommodate listening; there was no stimulus to start us out on a mechanically interpreted physiological sequence. However, could we not reduce

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<sup>17</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, pp. 88f.; Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 164.

<sup>18</sup>This part may best be seen in conjunction with #6(3).





listening itself to a physiological state? In classical physics natural phenomena are reduced to relations of particles in space and time. Why should we then not be so consequent as to reduce all phenomena, including consciousness or awareness itself, to a brain process, to physiology, to relations of particles in space and time?

It seems to me that science is increasingly giving us a viewpoint whereby organisms are able to be seen as physicochemical mechanisms: it seems that even the behavior of man himself will one day be explicable in mechanistic terms. There does seem to be, so far as science is concerned, nothing in the world but increasingly complex arrangements of physical constituents. All except for one place: in consciousness. . . . So sensations, states of consciousness, do seem to be the one sort of thing left outside the physicalist picture, and for various reasons I just cannot believe that this can be so. That everything should be explicable in terms of physics . . . except the occurrence of sensations seems to me to be frankly unbelievable.<sup>19</sup>

In accordance with this suggestion, language itself could finally be reduced to the movement of the vocal organs or, ultimately, to brain physiology. Would this not solve all our questions regarding language once and for all? Let us consider the reduction of consciousness to physiology.

We may note that a mere correlation between consciousness and physiology is insufficient for our aim to reduce consciousness to physiology. "Correlation" asserts at least

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<sup>19</sup>J. J. C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes", The Philosophy of Mind, edited by V. C. Chappell (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 161.



two distinct parts which, moreover, may be determined by a third. Nor should consciousness be merely described in terms of physiology; it should be physiology. The suggested reduction is significant precisely only to the extent that consciousness can be said to be really a brain process.

Having noted this, we may now choose an extreme example. Let us not insist in negative independence on what has as yet not been disproven. Instead, let us assume that all states of consciousness, all thoughts, all imaginations, all feelings, all sensations have a physiological aspect. Let us further assume that all these states can in principle be identified by their observable physiological aspects, just as a tree may be identifiable by one of its leaves. Moreover, let us assume that all these states can in principle be technologically controlled, manipulated, and synthetically produced, just as one can today alter one's "state" by such comparatively crude means as drugs or suicide.

According to these granted assumptions, a new barbarism will in principle also be possible, a hygienic, civilized barbarism. Once it is possible to control consciousness via its physiological aspects, it is also possible, indeed likely, that the highest hopes and highest fears of mankind, its ennobling sufferance and striving, will be ruled out, by universal or particular suffrage, as detrimental to man's mental health, or--we need not shy away from a comparison with the planned "creation" of synthetical fibres--as a possible but



undesirable molecular permutation.

Granted these assumptions, we may now consider the extreme case of a particular person who can observe his conscious state as well as its corresponding physiological aspect. Does this extreme example achieve the reduction of consciousness to physiology? By no means.

The physiological aspect of a conscious state appears itself in consciousness. The physiology which consciousness is suggested to be, occurs itself within the dimension of consciousness. Any physiological conception can always occur "only" in awareness. Consciousness is not empirically observable; on the contrary, all empirical observations, including those of the physiological aspects of consciousness, are conscious. Consciousness cannot step outside itself to confront itself as an empirical object. Consciousness cannot be located in physical space and time but is the space-time dimension<sup>20</sup> which renders the emergence of the physical space-time coordinates first possible--as abstractions:

Being present in the world, I observe the hovering falcon in the sky. The corresponding physiological aspect, which could maybe be observed, is in the brain. This physiological aspect may be described in terms of physical space-time

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<sup>20</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 79.







coordinates. This conception of space and time, however, is an abstraction: here, space is the distance between mass points, time is the distance between event points, both distances are vacuous. However, my presence in the world is not the vacuum between mass and event points. My life is not the vacuous distance between life and death, or between any two other "moments". Even a discription in terms of physical space and time concepts depends on what these concepts cannot accommodate: presence, even if only in the modus of latent presence. Listening, seeing, conceptualizing, the existence of man, science and empiricism itself would be a sheer impossibility if it was to be based on the physical space-time conception. The physical space-time conception is not a truer or a more disciplined one, but an absent-minded abstraction--and as such an expression of ingratitude.<sup>21</sup>

Physiological phenomena as termini of an empirical reduction cannot lead beyond the sphere of consciousness but are anchored within this sphere. Empiricism cannot be carried through on its own principles. Consciousness is consciousness. The physiological description of consciousness is an abstraction and as such a step behind. Physiology and consciousness are always one step apart. However, this distance is no temporal short-coming, nor is it a falling short of the explanation which in due time may still be overcome. This difference is a step beside, a step amiss.

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<sup>21</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 94.



## #8. ORDINARY LANGUAGE AS A TERMINUS

In the last section we considered convention as a terminus of language, however, primarily only to the extent that language allegedly developed "historically" from first concepts into a system of conventional symbols. We shall now consider a differently defined aspect of convention, ordinary language.

We will here be concerned with ordinary language only insofar as it is said to be a terminus of explanation of language. This it is said to be when it is taken as a criterion, as a court of last appeal, as a basis for "philosophical arbitration".

Ordinary language may be said to be a terminus in a twofold way. We may simply say (a) language is essentially what ordinary language is, or (b) what language is depends on how the word "language" is ordinarily used. In the following we shall consider the tenability of these two claims, beginning with the second one.

### (1)

If we observe how the word "language" is ordinarily used, will this ensure an understanding of language? Let us



briefly consider.

At first we may have to decide what range of uses may be said to be ordinary uses. Shall we include, for instance, past ordinary uses from etymology? Shall we include foreign languages? Shall we leave room for future ordinary uses?

However, let us assume these questions have been settled satisfactorily so that we indeed have a list of ordinary uses of the word "language". Do these uses now add up to a comprehensive understanding of what language is?

We may observe that at this point we have no criterion to decide which use is a more essential one, a derivative one, a peripheral one, or a figurative one. Nor did we have such a criterion when we previously decided on the range of ordinary uses. Such a criterion would presuppose the very understanding of the word "language" which our method is to provide.

This being the case, the question arises: Do we indeed have a list of different uses or meanings of the one word "language"? It seems it would be more appropriate to say that we have a list of the differently used words "language". So far, we have not found out how far the different uses coincide or if they have anything in common at all. They could be as far apart as the different words "right" meaning "correct", "to the right", "90 degree", etc.





How can we then find out from the different words "language" what language essentially is? We have already considered this problem in principle in #4: Without a guiding conception of what language is, this is impossible. We either have such a conception, and then our method is superfluous since it solely intended to provide such a conception. Or we do not have such a conception, and then our method cannot provide it either.

Let us now assume that there are no different ordinary uses of "language" so that our previous objection does not apply. Let us assume we have somehow located the prevailing uniform ordinary use of "language". Have we now ascertained what language essentially is?

Language is concerned. It is concerned to be appropriate. To speak appropriately is to speak well. Access to what-is, access to the phenomenon, access to what language is about, renders appropriate language possible.

Two plus two is four, but not because an opinion poll concludes that all people questioned indeed said so.<sup>1</sup> A scientist who is to investigate a physical phenomenon, will not investigate what people ordinarily say, what people think when they don't think, about this phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 66.



we may observe how words are ordinarily used, but the ordinary use may not be the appropriate one. We may observe how the word "language" is commonly used, but this is not an enquiry into what language is.

## (2)

It is, at least implicitly, a very common assumption that language is essentially what ordinary language is, that ordinary language is the basis or raw material for any so-called specialized language. Just as it may seem obvious that language is a mere continuation and enlargement of first beginnings, so it may appear self-evident that any so-called specialized, refined, sophisticated, poetical, or cultivated language is a mere derivation and deviation from customary, common, usual, or prevailing language. Indeed, such qualifying adjectives as "specialized" or "refined" already indicate by themselves where the orientation centers.

What then is ordinary language? Again, it may seem obvious that ordinary language is a means, a tool (see #10). It may seem to be primarily a means for expression, communication, and information; a sign to signal, signify and designate. Even when we realize that there is a performative function, or the "total speech act"<sup>3</sup> beside or prior to the merely descriptive or constative function of language, we

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<sup>3</sup>cf., J. L. Austin, How to do Things with Words, edited by J. O. Urmson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).



remain still within the preconception that language is functional.

However, is our ordinary, common sense understanding of ordinary language sufficient? Or does this notion require just as much investigation as the assumption that the ordinary is the essential? Common sense is a dubious guarantee. "The self-evident is always historical".<sup>4</sup> What may be self-evident to us, may not have been self-evident 100 years ago. For the advance of science, for instance, common sense has often been an impediment. Is it obvious that all bodies regardless of their density should accelerate in falling at the same rate while bubbles rise in the water just as balloons in the air? An enquiry must aim to enquire into the phenomenon itself and not into what common sense already believes to know about the phenomenon.

What then is ordinary language? To find an answer to this question we may, as already indicated, be inclined to investigate the ordinary meaning or the stock use of words or expressions, to group these words or their meanings or uses, or to compile lists of illocutionary forces. However, whatever purpose these activities may fulfil, they will not tell us what ordinary language is. On the contrary, these activities must already presuppose this, either explicitly or

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<sup>4</sup>Heidegger, Ding, p. 30. Cf. also p. 29.





implicitly, either clearly or vaguely. If we want to know what mathematics is, we cannot figure it out mathematically. We cannot set up physical experiments about physics.<sup>5</sup>

If we take "ordinary language" to mean the customary, commonplace, prevailing language, as we have in this section, we may be justified in saying that Heidegger has provided us with an analysis of this phenomenon in Sein und Zeit under the heading "Das Gerede". It is part of the analysis of existence in the mode of everydayness (Alltaeglichkeit) or inauthenticity (Uneigentlichkeit).

One may object to the translation of "Gerede" as "ordinary language". However, we do not insist on such a translation. We are concerned with an analysis of the phenomenon of commonplace, ordinary language, more than with the ordinary substitution of titles according to lexicographical precedents.

"Gerede" has been translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, with due reservations, as "idle talk".<sup>6</sup> These reservations refer to those remarks at the beginning of the analysis of "Gerede" which once more stress that this part of the interpretation of everydayness is not a moralizing

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<sup>5</sup>cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York and Evaston: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 211.



critique or everyday existence, that the word "Gerede" is to be without disparaging connotations.<sup>7</sup>

In agreement with these remarks, ordinary language is said to be a positive phenomenon insofar as it is constitutive for the common, prevailing understanding and orientation. No person is excluded from or untouched by this general "a priori" apprehension permeated in ordinary language, an apprehension of himself, of others, and of his world. Each person grows up in and into this general apprehension which ordinary language holds, provides, discloses. The general apprehension permeated in ordinary language, above all and a priori, unfolds existence in its mode of everydayness. Indeed, for the most part, the orientation of ordinary language remains determining. "In, out of, and against this (commonplace apprehension), all genuine understanding, orientation and communication, all rediscovery and new attainment is carried out."<sup>8</sup> May we thus not conclude that ordinary language is indeed the terminus of language?

Ordinary language discloses existence in its mode of everydayness. This disclosure is a positive phenomenon. What would an apprehension be without it? Would there be an apprehension without it? However, although ordinary language does

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<sup>7</sup>Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 167.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 169.



disclose, it remains to be seen, how it discloses. Is its disclosure an essential, a genuine one? What is existence in its mode of everydayness?

In accordance with the general apprehension already permeated in a spoken language, the hearer may understand the related discourse to a considerable degree without having reached an essential understanding of what the discourse is about. One does not quite understand what is talked about, rather, one attends to the talk as such. . . .

The fact that something has been said, the dictum, the saying now vouchsafe the talk and its understanding as being genuine and appropriate. And since this talk has lost or rather never gained the essential access to the object of conversation, it does not communicate from the basis of this primary attainment but by means of repetition and passing the word along. Such talk spreads and assumes authority. Things are the way they are said to be.

Common language (Gerede) is the possibility to understand everything without a previous attainment of its "sake" (Sache).<sup>10</sup>

Usual language discloses apprehension and orientation of existence in the mode of everydayness. This apprehension, however, has not gained any ground, nor is it orientated towards any ground.<sup>11</sup> Instead, it remains suspended at the level of convention, of usage, of self-evidency, of hear-say, of the obvious and "natural". Moreover, it tends to perpetuate and conceal this state of suspension.<sup>12</sup> The disclosure of common

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>11</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>12</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 169.





language is thus at the same time a concealment. It discloses a phenomenon while concealing any essential access to the phenomenon itself. "Usual language (Gerede), thus concealing, is the mode of existence of an uprooted understanding."<sup>13</sup> Since ordinary, common-place language does not reach back to and does not intend to reach out for an essential attainment of a phenomenon, since it is content to merely pass the word on and be "handy" in everyday commonplace discourse, it is a deprived modus of language.

However, is there any other language that reveals what ordinary language conceals? And can we thus gain a better apprehension of language? At this point we have not developed the thesis far enough to consider this question.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 170.



#9. THE FORMAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE  
AS TERMINI OF LANGUAGE

At times language is interpreted in terms or by means of its formal aspects, such as statement, grammar, syntax, or logic. Patzig has stated an analogy which indicates vividly why such aspects may be preferred:<sup>1</sup>

With our eyes we see the natural world. The microscope is not suitable to view the immediate surroundings. For this purpose it is far too selective, far too awkward to handle. If we are, however, to investigate the workings of the eye itself, we cannot do without a microscope. The microscope is of course no substitute for the eye, far from it: With our eyes we look through the microscope and thus gain insight into the eye's delicate nature.

Analogously, we may investigate our natural language by means of highly efficient calculi (Kalkuele), for instance by means of the calculus of mathematical logic. Such calculi are no substitutes for our natural language; as such they would intolerably complicate and impede the exchange of information in practical life. Furthermore, they presuppose a

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<sup>1</sup>Patzig, Sprache, pp. 11f.



natural language. Only on the basis of a natural language can they be learned, applied, and explained. Yet, with their aid we may gain insight into the nature of our language.

We already indicated in #4 that the approach to a phenomenon determines the result of the investigation. The approach, the method, or the approach-mechanism determines the range of phenomena that can and cannot come into view, and how it does and does not come into view. The mere fact that we CAN apply calculi to the phenomenon of language is thus no guarantee that they can or will yield anything essential about language, particularly when these calculi themselves exclude any alternative as a possible comparison. Although it may be that these calculi guarantee "unambiguity of the ways of inference",<sup>2</sup> it remains to be asked first whether these calculi as such may justifiably be applied to language, or to what extent and for what purpose they may be applied. If we ignore to ask this question, we will fail to understand what the results our method yields indeed signify. To concern oneself with this question, however, presupposes:

- a) a guiding understanding of what language is
- b) an understanding of the nature of the calculus to be applied.

Since we already mentioned the "circulus vitiosus" to which (a) again refers us, we shall here attend to (b).

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.





The calculus, in our case logic, did not fall from the sky but developed. It developed within assumptions and intentions. To say a priori that anything is accessible through logic, that logic can accommodate anything, that it is applicable to all phenomena, is simply another dogmatism.<sup>3</sup>

We are not arguing against logic or for irrationality.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, we hope that our argument has so far been tenable. We simply say that logic, just as science or religion, once established, cannot be taken as a guaranty or surrogate for thinking without becoming itself a superstition. Is it irrational or unphilosophical to ask that logic, just as common sense, should prove its identity? Maybe, according to the prevailing conception of logic this is asking too much. But how did this prevailing conception come about? Logic developed; it was not always what it is held to be now, as the word "logos" indicates. How did it and could it become what it is?

Is logic the last possible criterion or does it receive its directive from beyond itself? Is logic a set of irreducible suspended principles? Does logic essentially reside in the relation and connection of concepts or constituents of statements?<sup>5</sup> Is logic a kind of mathematics

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<sup>3</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>5</sup>cf., Heidegger, Ding, p. 125.



applicable to sentences and sentence structures?<sup>6</sup> Or has logic lost sight of its origin and has to return to its source? What does the following peculiar phenomenon indicate?

We may say of someone who temporarily fails to perform simple logical tasks that he is diverted, dis-tracted, or confused. We speak as if a state of diversion, distraction, or confusion exempted a person from being logical. To do logic properly, or to be logical, thus seems to depend not only on the axioms, definitions, or procedures of logic; it also depends on a certain so-called state of mind.

Do we want to use a state of temporary confusion as an argument against logic? The case is not as simple as we have indicated so far.

There are many so-called states of mind which are in various ways either impeditive or conducive to doing logic or being logical. Some such states are anticipation, trust, determination, irritation, faith, hope, indifference, confidence, fear, joy. Since we are always in such or a similar so-called state of mind--and categorically indiscernible from it--we may ask: Which state is most, which least conducive to logic? What is the relation of state of mind and logic? How do being and logical thought relate?

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<sup>6</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 122.



To be logical, to do logic properly, one should not be dis-tracted but concentrated, centered. One should be col-lected, gathered. Unfortunately, however, it seems logic has nothing whatsoever to say in its axioms, definitions, or rules about this state of mind upon which it so much depends. It seems logic is absent-minded about its prerequisite state of mind. Logic simply trans-scands (scandere: to climb) its prerequisite state of mind. Only because this is the case, could logical tasks be transferred to machines.

To be logical, one has to be col-lected. The Latin word "legere" means "to gather". Similarly, the German word "lesen" means "to collect", "to gather" as well as "to read" in the sense of gathering.<sup>7</sup> The German word "legen" in "ueberlegen" (to consider) also refers us to "legere": "gather".<sup>8</sup> The Latin word "legere", however, in turn refers us to the Greek word "legein". "Legein" is ordinarily translated as "to say" or "to think". We must realize, however, that "legein" as "to think" means essentially "to gather" and not "to reason".<sup>9</sup> The verb "legein" refers us to its noun "logos". That which logic is absent-minded about, the word "logos" thus names: gathering.<sup>10</sup> The fact that logic has

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<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 95.

<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 121.

<sup>9</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 94; Denken, p. 122; Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, pp. 208 - 212.

<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, pp. 129 - 133.







nothing to say about the prerequisite state of mind we may thus collect into the words: Logic trans-scands logos.

We asked: How is the application of calculi to language justified? We shall now attempt to restate this question more precisely.

Language is concerned. Language is concerned to be appropriate. The concern of language we will provisionally call what-is or the phenomenon. Language is concerned to respond to what-is. The crucial question now is: Must the calculi, must syntax and grammar be equally derivative from the phenomenon? Is there harmony or could there be a dichotomy between the phenomenon and the formal aspects of language? Do the formal structures correspond to the constitution of the phenomenon, or do we impose the formal structure upon what-is and possibly distort it? Although calculi may guarantee "unambiguity of the ways of inference", do these ways of inference comply with the phenomenon? Are syntax and grammar appropriate to what-is, or are they conventional regulative rules for the traffic, for the passing along of words? Does a mere logical or philosophical analysis of formal structures facilitate, impede, or simply evade any concern about what-is? If the formal structure of our language were metaphysical, would not a mere analysis of this structure, would not any philosophical attempt based on such conventional structures perpetuate metaphysics? Patzig states "we ourselves must



guard against reaching rash conclusions from the forms of language about the nature of what is presented in language".<sup>11</sup> He also emphasizes that thought (der Gedanke) is always endangered by language.<sup>12</sup> Highly important as this realization is, we must nevertheless question whether thought itself is ever untouched by the forms of language, and how we can indeed know whether or not or to what extent thought stands outside this influence. This difficulty is evident in the following example.

Since Plato and Aristotle there has been dominant a peculiar similarity in the structures of the thing (object), of the statement, and of truth. The thing is a carrier (substantia) of attributes (accidens).<sup>13</sup> True is said to be what agrees with the thing, what coincides with what is the case. What coincides are words, not simply a number of words but a certain connection of words, the simple statement. Truth is confined to the befitting statement.<sup>14</sup> The statement consists of subject and predicate, just as the thing consists of substantia and accidens. The appropriate truth about a thing as a carrier of attributes is the corresponding simple statement as a fitting connection of subject and predicate.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Patzig, Sprache, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>cf., Heidegger, Ding, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>15</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 29.



This apparent parallelism between substantia and accidens on the one side and subject and predicate on the other presents the questions:

Was the essential structure of truth and sentence modelled after the structure of the thing? Or was, vice versa, the essential structure of the thing as the carrier of attributes interpreted according to the constitution of the sentence as a unity of "subject" and "predicate"? Did man copy the structure of the sentence from the constitution of the thing, or did he project the structure of the sentence into things? If the latter should be the case, another question would immediately arise: How can the sentence, the statement, assume to provide the measure and the model for how things in their thingness shall be defined?<sup>16</sup>

A third possibility could be that neither sentence structure nor thing structure were primary but that both have a common origin.<sup>17</sup>

The statement has held an exceptional position in philosophy ever since the conception of truth changed from unhiddenness (aletheia) to agreement between judgment and its object. Heidegger has attempted to show that the first indications for this change are contained in Plato's allegory of the cave.<sup>18</sup> Since then not the unhiddenness as such which reveals what-is, but the proper idea of what-is became dominant. The conception of truth as idea, however, implies and demands an

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 35. Compare also Martin Heidegger, Holzwege (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1963), pp. 12ff.

<sup>17</sup> cf., Heidegger, Ding, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, pp. 5 - 52.





articulation of the proper view, the correct apprehension and interpretation of the appearance of what-is, and its adequate expression.<sup>19</sup> The expression, the statement is adequate insofar as it coincides with what-is. The statement as the judgment of the understanding, as the correct conception is now the residence of truth.<sup>20</sup> The unhiddenness as such, which first of all reveals what-is for judgment, falls into neglect and finally out of view--and thus gives rise to the rule of metaphysics.

This change in the conception of truth renders any subsequent science as well as any "critique" of reason, judgment, and concepts possible. This change in the conception of truth guarantees the statement its dominant position in philosophy. Logic can now not only become the science of the statement<sup>21</sup> and its ways of inference, it can claim to be as the science of the statement at the same time the science of thought and language, and what-is. Now, the categories can be abstracted from judgments, from statements about what-is.<sup>22</sup>

Following these brief remarks, we may be permitted to question what seem to be necessary assumptions of some

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<sup>19</sup>cf., Ibid., pp. 40ff.

<sup>20</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 44; Sein und Zeit, p. 214.

<sup>21</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup>cf., Heidegger, Ding, p. 48.



philosophical approaches. Why should investigations into thought, language, or what-is commence from and be content with an analysis of words and statements? Is it self-evident that words or statements are adequate representatives or prototypes of language or thought?<sup>23</sup>

Each statement is as such a sentence. However, it remains to be considered whether all speaking is a stating, whether speaking, as grammar believes, may at all be conceived in terms of the sentence.<sup>24</sup>

What is a statement itself? As in the case of ordinary language, our ordinary conception of the statement may be inadequate. Must the essence of language lie either within the range of logic or syntax or grammar or statement, or within that range which these formal aspects can make accessible and explore?

Modern analytic philosophy remains within the range of this assumption. Even when Austin recognizes the performative aspect of the statement, even when he recognizes what the total speech act can do and the context in which it occurs, he commences from the statement as the prototype of language.

When Ryle<sup>25</sup> groups proposition factors into the same category whenever they can complete a sentence-frame in a non-absurd, significant way, then these categories depend on

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<sup>23</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup>Heidegger, Denken, p. 163.

<sup>25</sup>G. Ryle, "Categories", Proceedings of Aristotelian Society XXXVIII (1938), pp. 189 - 206.



the "logic", grammar, and syntax of a prevailing speech pattern. Whether or not these formal aspects are themselves significant in relation to what-is, remains to be examined.

Another example is the ambiguous demand for non-ambiguity. Multiplicity or complexity of meaning is something hoped to be eliminated, since it is held to be either equal or conducive to vagueness or ambiguity. Although it may be admitted that "vagueness and ambiguity are the price which natural language knowingly pays for the convenience and fluency of communication",<sup>26</sup> it is anticipated that the terms of a more exact language should be clear and precise.

This demand as such may be appreciated; we do not want to recommend negligence of language. It must be asked, however, what the standard for exactness can be. Can this standard be derived from the formal aspects of language when these calculi themselves may not be appropriate to the phenomena? Would the demand for "singleness of meaning" be justified if the phenomenon itself was infinitely rich and highly suggestive? In this case, a responsibly responding multiplicity and complexity of meaning in language would neither be vague nor ambiguous but precise, exact and appropriate.<sup>27</sup> If the phenomenon itself was contradictory--since Hegel we should consider

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<sup>26</sup>Patzig, Sprache, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup>cf.: Heidegger, Denken, pp. 68, 168; Satz vom Grund, p. 161; Sprache, p. 75; Martin Heidegger, Zur Seinsfrage (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1959), p. 42.







this possibility all the more<sup>28</sup>--the adequate language should be contradictory, although this may be contradictory to the formal aspects of language from which the concept "contradiction" was derived. In fact, if the calculi of language fail us, the word "contradictory" itself is ambiguous, provided "opposite" and "identity" which "contradictory" presupposes ever were non-ambiguous in formal logical terms.

To what conclusion has the discussion in this section led us? If we want to avoid the merely dogmatic assertion that the formal aspects of language are a priori valid and applicable as termini, it must be shown that these formal aspects are genuine representations of language and can appropriately accommodate the phenomena. The phenomenon is the ultimate criterion, even for the formal aspects. Our attempt must be to gain access to the phenomenon. If the formal aspects do not further but impede or conceal this access, they must be abandoned or suffer the change that occurs when they are traced back and returned to their source which they themselves have become accustomed to renounce.

Returning to the analogy we stated at the beginning of this discussion, we may formulate our conclusion in this way:

Just as we could not reduce the existence of man to a

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<sup>28</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 38.



set of causes, just as we could not reduce hearing to the physiology of the ear, so we cannot reduce seeing to the physiology of the eye, regardless of how efficiently the microscope may facilitate such a physiological examination, and regardless of how beneficial the results of such investigations may in some cases turn out to be. The range of phenomena the microscope is devised for and thus admits does not explain seeing. Instead, the microscope presupposes seeing in a way which in principle can never be overtaken empirically. A consequent empiricism is an absurdity (cf., #7(3)).

If there is something to our analogy between eye and language, microscope and calculi, we may thus wonder whether indeed language can in principle be reducible to termini of explanation. This we shall consider in the next section.



## #10. LANGUAGE AS A MEANS

For modern man every thing, everything, has turned into a means. The land has long ceased to bring forth fruit and bear animals. The land is used as a source of actual or potential consumer goods. It is the object of assessment and re-assessment, of search and re-search. The land that can no more or as yet not be exploited, is wasteland. What cannot even be used--is waste.

Man uses his abilities and his common sense, his will and his goodwill, his time and his brains. World and space are at his disposal. Art, ethics, religion, and culture have functions to fulfil. Education must pay, somehow, or it is not worthwhile. Thought is a means to gain knowledge. Man uses himself and others. Man creates--as never before. Man lives and thinks creatively. He re-creates, re-conditions the world, the social structure, the mental sphere. He creates synthetic substances, artificial organs and satellites. Man plots the control of everything there is, to create a happier, richer, and affluent life for all. No thing, nothing is excluded; just as if it was man's fate or task to subdue and control everything.

This being the case, we need not be surprised that





language, too, quite self-evidently, is held to be a means. Language is a means for information, communication, expression. Language serves a function. Man has language at his disposal, similar to a tool, a property or an ability. We use language, we employ words. We "open up new possibilities for language".<sup>1</sup> The following nihilistic account is by Gilbert Ryle:<sup>2</sup>

Before passing on we should notice one big difference between using canoe-paddles or tennis rackets on the one hand and using postage stamps, safety-pins, coins and words on the other. Tennis rackets are wielded with greater or less skill; even the tennis-champion studies to improve. But, with some unimportant reservations, it is true to say that coins, cheques, stamps, separate words, buttons and shoelaces offer no scope for talent. Either a person knows or he does not know how to use and how not to misuse them.

Is this estimation of language as a means so false?  
Is this not what language is ordinarily "taken to be"?

Again, we must object: It is anything but self-evident

- a) that the ordinary is also the essential (cf. #8(1)),
- b) that we have essentially understood the ordinary (cf. #8(2)).

We must thus consider the claim that language is a means more carefully. We will proceed in three steps, while attempting to secure the implications in the fourth.

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<sup>1</sup>Patzig, Sprache, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert Ryle, "Ordinary Language", Philosophy and Ordinary Language, edited by Charles E. Caton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 117.



## (1)

Let us compare the following two pairs of sentences:

- (1) The boy runs through the rain.
- (2) The boy does not run through the rain.
- (3) A living being speaks a language.
- (4) A living being does not speak a language.

(1) and (2) are two different statements about the same boy. What the same boy does is different in each case. Different predications relate to the same subject.

In (3) and (4), however, the case is an entirely different one. A living being that speaks a language is essentially different from a living being that does not speak a language. There is no one same living being that at one time does and at another does not speak a language. Although the predication differs in (1) and (2), the subject remains the same; yet, because the "predication" differs in (3) and (4), the subjects are essentially different, incommensurable. The nature of the "predication" in (3) and (4), if it is permitted to speak here of predication at all, is different from that in (1) and (2). Would it be more adequate to say to-speak-a-language is not a predicate?

## (2)

We will here be content to merely translate two passages from Nietzsche's Jenseits von Gut und Boese.



With regard to the superstitions of the logicians, I will not tire to underline again and again a small short fact which these superstitious people are reluctant to admit, namely that a thought comes when "the thought" wills to come and not when "I" will. Thus, it is a falsification of what is actually the case to say: the subject "I" is the condition for the predicate "think". It thinks: but that this "it" be indeed the old famous "I", is, to say it mildly, only an assumption, an assertion, least of all "immediate certainty". Ultimately, one has already overstated the case with this "it thinks": even this "it" contains an interpretation of the phenomenon and does not belong to the phenomenon itself. One concludes here according to the grammatical habit "thinking is an activity, each activity<sup>3</sup> requires someone who is active, consequently . . .".

Formerly, . . . people believed in "the soul", just as they believed in grammar and the grammatical subject: they said, "I" is condition, "think" is predicate and conditional--thought is<sup>4</sup> an activity to which a subject must be thought as cause.

Is it also a falsification, a concealment of what is actually the case to insist: The subject "I" is the condition, the cause, for the predicate, the effect "speak a language"?

### (3)

A means is functional. It inter-mediate. It mediates between its end, its function, and whoever or whatever sets the end, performs the function. A function is a function of X for Y. A means can function, can perform only to the degree that the end is formed and made firm, is ad-firmed, affirmed.

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<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Boese (Muenchen: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1955), Vol. 2, pp. 580f.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 616.





It can function only to the degree that the end is made stable, is e-established. An a priori analysis of means prior to ends, a cleaning of tools irrespective of ends, is a misunderstanding.<sup>5</sup> If this misunderstanding becomes habitual, it may establish compulsive tool cleaning without end, but no ends.

A means intermediates between the subject and its object, its objective. Previous to Descartes, a subject could have been any existing thing as such,<sup>6</sup> and an object could have been anything conceived, such as a "golden mountain".<sup>7</sup> With Descartes, the "I" became the distinguished subject, the founding underlying ground which ad-firms and e-establishes other things as objects.

A means intermediates between subject and object. A means is a relation, a bridge. The subject establishes and affirms the objective, the mean's end. We also said, for modern man everything has turned into a means. He uses the land, his time, his thought, his senses, other people, himself. Earth, space, logic, abilities, capacities, language--are means. Art, ethics, religion, society, the individual, the state--fulfil functions.

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<sup>5</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup>cf. Heidegger, Ding, p. 81; Holzwege, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup>cf. Heidegger, Ding, p. 82.



If we thus proceed to define everything as a means, as a relation, we may wonder what is left to sustain the relation. What is this: a "subject" without time, senses, understanding, language, etc.? If anything turns into a means, anything is assigned to functions. Between what does the means mediate now? The "subject" has ceased; the relation can no longer be sustained, nor can the mean's end be affirmed or established.

In practice we may for some time succeed to ignore the absurdity to which consequent functionalism leads. When one expert speaks of the use of ..., he may forget that his colleagues already apportioned to other functions what he still believes to be the "substance" of the subject which he needs to sustain the relation. In order to sustain one function, we may temporarily suspend all other possible ones. This implies, however, that the validity of one teleological explanation depends on the suspension of other possible teleological explanations.

(4)

Our methodological concern, our inquiry into commonly suggested termini of language has now reached its crucial stage: Is it justified to postulate language as distinct or discernible from man?

When we postulate language as a tool, we simultaneously postulate man as the user of this tool. We must abstract



language from man to postulate the user of the tool language. Are we justified to do this? Are we justified to postulate an "I" without language? Is there such an "I"?

Just as there is no "I" outside time or world, so there is no "I" outside language. Man outside language is an abstraction, but not man. Least of all would such an abstraction be capable of using the tool language, of sustaining the function of language. We cannot, in principle, discern language from man, since language is constitutive for the being of man. The question concerning language thus turns into a question concerning the being of man.

It is important to realize the full implications of the phenomenological fact that there is not a subject outside language. Just as we are incapable of stepping outside existence to confront it qua object, so we are in principle incapable of bringing language qua object before us.<sup>8</sup> Language can never be object. Language can not be object since a subject does not exist outside language.

If language can not be object, we can, in a strict sense, not speak about language (cf. #2). If language can not be object, man does not have language as he has a property, a tool, or an instrument. It also follows that man can neither be the creator, or inventor, nor the master of "his" language,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup> cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 146; Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 120.





just as he cannot create, invent, or lord his existence. To the extent that a theory presupposes its object, there can not be a theory of language. Finally, if knowledge, according to the traditional conception, presupposes an object of knowledge, there can be no knowledge about language.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, if explanation presupposes an object of explanation, there can be no explanation about language, just as there can be no essential explanation of existence.

The question concerning language is indiscernible from the question concerning the being of man. Neither being nor language can be objectified. There is no knowledge or explanation about language or being. Thus, we are now able to realize more fully and in general the deficiency of the commonly suggested termini of language which we investigated. These termini of language are terminal terms of explanation. The explanation of language aims to reduce language to terminal terms. These termini may be aspects of language, or they may be said to lie entirely outside language, in which case it is attempted to explain language in terms of something else. However, language "is not this and that, i.e. still something other than itself. Language is language".<sup>11</sup> There is no foothold outside language or existence from where we could comprehend either.

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<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 266.

<sup>11</sup>Heidegger, Denken, p. 99.



Alleged terminal aspects of language are for instance traditional logic or grammar. However, how do logic or grammar coincide with the being of man from which language is indiscernible? Unless and until such a coincidence exists, all investigations from or of aspects cannot attain the essence of language, simply because these investigations trans-scended the being of man in the first place. This trans-scandence is metaphysics. Any a-scandence of this trans-scandence into greater and greater heights of proficiency remains metaphysical. The investigations of language as well as of the aspects of language have to de-scand into what has been trans-scanded: the simplicity and poverty of existence.<sup>12</sup>

At a time when most regions of the earth were still unexplored, one guided circumnavigation had established that the earth was round. Who would want to insist on the preconception of a flat earth simply because all regions have even today not been explored? Similarly, we did not refer to all the possible termini of explanation of language. Nor did we or could we say everything that may be said for and against each individual terminus of explanation. We have attempted to bring forward a coherent argument, which can accommodate and is supported by excerpts from and references to Heidegger's various writings, and which aims to establish: The reduction of language to termini of explanation metaphysically trans-

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<sup>12</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, pp. 103, 119.



scands the being of man from which language is indiscernible.  
 Language is language; this "tautology" dismisses the reductive  
 method.





## #11. TRANS-SCANDENCE PREVAILS

Again and again during the course of this thesis have we observed this peculiar phenomenon of trans-scandence. The "explanation" of hearing trans-scanded listening. The "explanation" of man as a congregation of effects from corresponding causes passed over the existence of man. The physiologist "explained" consciousness in terms of brain processes as if a description of brain processes could ever surpass consciousness. The reductive "explanations" of language are trans-scandental. The blind man's "explanation" of light overstepped seeing, just as the microscopic investigation of the delicate structure of the eye. Logic trans-scanded logos. Classical physics aimed to reduce natural phenomena to a description of the formal aspects of the phenomena. Modern physics, increasingly since Max Planck, is the transgression of the entire phenomena towards a related comprehensive abstract mathematical formula. "The in such a sense object-less axiomatic form of scientific thought today stands before immense possibilities."<sup>1</sup> Because science trans-scands, it is metaphysical.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 195.



Trans-scandence prevails. Everydayness and its ordinary language trans-scands the authentic access to the phenomena (cf. #8(2)). In #9 we indicated that truth as aletheia (unhiddenness) changed to the conception of truth as congruency (correspondence, correctness) between judgments or statements and their "sake", their objects. This rational conception of truth trans-scands the unhiddenness within which any object, any judgment, any statement, any congruency may occur.

However, trans-scandence is not merely a climbing over, a passing over something indifferent, it is a passing over its own source, which first of all permits even this trans-scandence and its results, without which trans-scandence and its results would not be.<sup>3</sup> The physiological "explanation" of the eye trans-scands seeing, it trans-scands what first of all permits a physiological explanation. Logic trans-scands logos. The physical time concept trans-scands presence. Because trans-scandence trans-scands not something coincidental but its source, empiricism and functionalism can reach their limit and become absurd at the very moment when they attempt to be so consequent as to explicitly and categorically deny their trans-gression.

Trans-scandence prevails. It prevails to the extent that it itself and what is trans-scanded go generally unnoticed. Trans-scandence trans-scands itself. Consequently,

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Heidegger, Zur Seinsfrage, pp. 39f.



the mere suggestion that science or rationality could be metaphysical seems presumptuous. Secretly, it seems, we are still convinced of the following model:

There is a subject, an "I" which has consciousness or awareness, like a pair of glasses. When the "I" attempts to be objective, it retreats behind these glasses to mirror objectivity. It may be admitted that the glasses may cause some refraction or distortion,<sup>4</sup> but this is believed not to alter the "facts" ultimately because, firstly, the glasses are said to be very flat, secondly, everybody looks through them at any time anyway. The glasses are thus taken as a physical constant, fundamental to any perception or thought, but so rudimentary, primitive, and uniform as to be inessential, trivial. A constant which always occurs may be cancelled out, trans-scanded, and forgotten. And so we look at things as if we did not exist. That the "I" which wears glasses is a fictitious abstraction, that the "glasses" may indeed be the only space within which any dimension, any thing, may occur, that objectivity may just be a trans-scandental mode of existence, such thoughts may remain concealed.

Granted that trans-scandence prevails, we may now ask:

1. What are its sources? How could trans-scandence establish itself so firmly?

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<sup>4</sup>Thus, "psychic" space is said to be unisotropic. Cf. Robert Havemann, Dialektik ohne Dogma? (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1964), pp. 38f.







2. What else is there or can there be but trans-scandence?

(1)

We mentioned previously that since Plato and Aristotle truth as aletheia began gradually to be trans-scanded by truth as idea. It became increasingly dominant to view and assess what-is through the idea, through the conception. The correct interpretation of the appearances, the articulation of the proper conception became significant. Conceptual-projectional thought (vorstellendes Denken) arose which had not been at the early decisive beginning of essential thought.<sup>5</sup> Logos turned into the statement and its logic.

The being of what-is thus changes. The unhiddenness of what-is in its autonomous presence is overtaken and displaced by the sufficient conception of what-is. The being of what-is, the being of things becomes to depend on the efficient conceptual projection. Things are uprooted as things and become objects. They have to be affirmed and established by the "I", the distinguished subject. The subject has to provide the efficient conception, the sufficient reason, the ground for objects.

The efficient conception, the sufficient reason does not merely guarantee the understanding of objects, it justifies

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<sup>5</sup>cf. Heidegger, Denken, p. 128.



their being, it is their being.<sup>6</sup> *Esse = percipi*; not: understanding = *percipi*.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Leibniz states the principle: nihil est sine ratione, nothing is without reason, nothing is without ground.<sup>8</sup> Reason as ground, however, is conceptual-projectional. Reason secures and establishes the being as well as the understanding of what-is. And by providing sufficient reason, the subject a-certains itself.<sup>9</sup> This Leibnizian principle is constitutive for what is today.

Nothing is without reason, nothing is without ground, reason as conceptual-projectional thought is the ground for everything, nothing comes into being without reason, reason can provide ground and thus ascertain the being of man: these are but variations of the same trans-scandalental metaphysical principle. This metaphysical principle accommodated man's certainty within the conception of divine creation and providence. However, when man emancipated himself from this "religious" certainty, the same metaphysical principle accommodated the substitute and successor for "religious" certainty, the self-certainty of the subject based on its securing of sufficient reason.

This metaphysical principle renders possible and

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<sup>6</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, pp. 82f.

<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, pp. 234ff.

<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, pp. 54f.

<sup>9</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, pp. 100f.



accommodates science and technology,<sup>10</sup> the materialistic conception of cause - effect<sup>11</sup> and of stimulus - response, the reduction of phenomena to termini of explanation, etc., as well as their trans-scandalous trans-gression of the being of man. The termini of the explanation of language are not merely intended to be possible ways of understanding language or some of its aspects. The significance of these termini is exactly that they are said to be essentially language.

The safeguarding of objects by means of the securing of reasons, by means of conceptual-projectional thought, is crucial for the being of man as subject. Only the understanding establishes and affirms the object, brings the object to a stand. If the understanding fails, the object collapses, and the subject is endangered. The sciences attempt the securing of sufficient reasons and their comprehensive, axiomatic, non-contradictory arrangement. The sciences are primarily not utilitarian or thought-economical. Who wants to think as cheaply as possible? The sciences secure the object through conceptual-projectional thought and thus ascertain the subject as the conceptual-projectional thinker. They explore and pursue what-is for explanations. Conceptions are projected over what-is to render it plannable, calculable, computable, manageable. Nature is not acknowledged, far from

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<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 59; Vortraege und Aufsaetze, pp. 59 - 65; Holzwege, p. 177.

<sup>11</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 54.







it: it is attacked<sup>12</sup> and forced into mathematical conceptions through the projection of theories and experiments. Nature is forced into our positing of questions.<sup>13</sup>

Thought as conceptual-projectional thought is trans-scending the being of man. Man as the conceptual-projectional thinker is only insofar secure as he can ground what-is in conceptual-projectional thought;<sup>14</sup> the subject attains its significance as the pro-jector and securer of its conceptions, of its judgments. Things lost their autonomy; they are up-rooted. They are what they are conceived to be. Life is what you make it. Things are certain only insofar as they are realized in conceptual-projectional thought. They are what they are judged to be. Whether the specific judgment, the specific reason, is scientific, ethical, aesthetical, "existential", or even irrational, is secondary. Primary is that man's judgment, his conception, remains as the only bond, as his only project. In principle, man's judgment and his will that wills this judgment remain as the only bond. In his will, man has become, a world apart from being free, bond-less over things. A world, not merely an understanding, emerges "as will and idea (Vorstellung)".

Thus, the trans-scandence to conceptual-projectional thought results in a metaphysics of the will. It takes a will

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<sup>12</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 100; Zur Seinsfrage, p.22.

<sup>13</sup>cf., Heidegger, Ding, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 101.



to "con-capere", to pro-ject, to under-stand. Since the subject is as conceptual-projectional thought, since it is entirely absorbed in and up-held by this thought, the will to conceive, to conceptualize, to project, is the subject's will to be--trans-scandentially. If this being qua will is to be enhanced, the subject, or the society qua community of subjects, must aim to extend its conceptual-projectional thought. This aim, of course, prevails and succeeds today as never before:

We said, for modern man every thing has turned into a means. What projectional-conceptual thought has secured, is available to be subdued, exploited, used, manipulated. It is available to be whatever man wills it to be. Yet, what has been secured, will never suffice. The will to be--initially trans-scandental and therefore consequently insatiable--must project conceptual thought further and further into all conceivable spheres, the arts and humanities included as well as the subject's own physiological aspects, to procure new possibilities, to produce new material for the will, and ideally: to guarantee omnipotent control. The foundation for this all-pervasive nihilistic urge (will) towards total technocracy is the subject's trans-scandence, its metaphysical assumption that only what has been explained and what has been provided with sufficient reason, is justified and secured in its existence. We may note, however, that this will to be, since it is initially trans-scandental, in order merely to



maintain itself, must constantly will to go beyond its present achievement, must hate all "hitherto". Its ideal of omnipotent technocracy is therefore at the same time its engulfing impotence. He who is "free" to will, why should he will?

Today, the study of cybernetics is diligently taken up. That today a comparison between man and computing machines can appear relevant, is less paradoxical once we realize that long since man has trans-scandentially been as the steersman and governor of rational thought entities. The computer is "created" in the image of man, or rather in the image of the image man has of himself. The computer is an instance of modern anthropomorphism.

When today so-called analytic philosophy willfully attempts to furnish a tool which will facilitate and guarantee the "unambiguous" spread of information, then we may see this philosophy itself as a computing service, as but one aspect of the prevailing metaphysical force towards total technocracy. It shall no longer be permissible, it shall no longer even be endured, to speak only to those who have ears to hear, to hide the precious in the absurd, a novelty in a platitude, to guard the unspeakable, to merely indicate, to hide, to tempt and invite the reader to grasp, to sound out the silence of a word. Instead, a tool is to be devised for the immediate cash exchange of rational entities. For this purpose, controlled manipulation has to be extended into the sphere of language. The linguistic "material" at hand has to be







"analysed" in order--to be deliniated, into speedways. The quest for a universal foolproof language prevails. If a mathematical universal language is too awkward, maybe an ordinary universal language will do.

The goal is a foolproof tool with which at best anybody can count on and a-count for anything. Just as in prevailing "psychological" testing the reflex counts, so here: thought, the listening to a manifold echo, the sounding out, the waiting for an answer does not count, is metaphysically trans-scanded and thus declared non-existent. Just as conceptual-projectional thought does not merely guarantee the understanding of an object but is the ground of its being, so here: What cannot be said--is not. What one cannot say--is not: this is merely a derivative from nihil est sine ratione.

When today some are fortunate enough to be led to the realization that conceptual-projectional thought fore-goes or trans-scands their existence, that their life is use-less, they may tend to be disappointed or feel cheated. However, this general disappointment--including that rainbow of hate, ranging from sarcasm and pretence to indifference and comfort--is but a hanging on, now negatively and in late autumn, to the principle: nihil est sine ratione: anything stands with conceptual-projectional thought.

Trans-scandence prevails. We attempted to search for its origin. However, can we apprehend trans-scandence in



terms of some crucial philosophical passage or statement? It depends on what philosophy is. Does philosopher X merely pick up the threads from philosophers A, B, D, H, . . . in order to spin his yarn and maybe even weave it into an axiomatically consistent (non-contradictory), comprehensive conceptual framework of high but maybe only nominalistic quality? Is philosophy an enriched result, an intellectual feast, or is philosophy neither a means nor a result but re-guard? If the origin of trans-scandence lay in a statement, from where does this statement derive the force to banish a whole age into its servitude? What linguistic analysis will explain this phenomenon? When the principle nihil est sine ratione is constitutive for what is today, then not because Leibniz thought it up or invented it or carried it forward from somebody else, but because he brought into the open what had long since been determining.

Nihil est sine ratione. This sentence states that in order to be, everything must be grounded in reason.<sup>15</sup> It implies that man, in order to be, must look for ground, for reason, for justification. The sentence states that man sees ground as reason, but also reveals that man seeks ground. Why does man seek ground? Maybe, because he is ground-less and fails to acknowledge this? Is man's failure to acknowledge his groundlessness the origin of trans-scandence? Reason as

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<sup>15</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 54.



conceptual-projectional thought is to a-certain man, is to secure man. "Secure", "se-cura" means "without care". Why should man want to be secure? Maybe, because he is care (Sorge)<sup>16</sup> and fails to acknowledge it?

## (2)

Man without language would not be man. There is no "I" outside language. Language is constitutive for any "I". Language is not categorically discernible from the being of man. The reductive method, when applied to language, transcends or sur-passes the being of man and is therefore metaphysical. Language cannot be an object for a subject, since a subject cannot be outside language. Man does not have language. There cannot be knowledge or explanation about language.

Since language cannot be an object, does this imply that we must be subjective about language? We may here be reminded of Kierkegaard who rejected the objective knowledge about religion, the scientific-historical as well as the formal-dogmatic as well as the hopeful-plausible, and instead spoke of becoming subjective. Whereas objectivity is linked with rationality, subjectivity is ordinarily associated with irrationality.

We do not intend to investigate here what subjectivity

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<sup>16</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, par. 39 - 45, 57, 63 - 65.







is for Kierkegaard. Without any risk we may state, however, that it does not refer to what the accusation of subjectivity usually implies, namely the determination of the subject by personal bias, preference, inclination, or transient emotional states.

Is there only one alternative to objectivity, and must this alternative be subjectivity? Already we have repeatedly indicated how interdependent subject and object are. According to this interdependence, the ideal of objectivity may appear as a subjective attitude. Provided, the distinction of subject and object is a metaphysical trans-scendental one, the preference of objectivity over subjectivity is just as metaphysical as the preference of subjectivity over objectivity. A mere inversion of a metaphysical principle does not render this principle less metaphysical.<sup>17</sup>

We already said that there can be no knowledge about language. This implies that there can be neither objective nor subjective knowledge about language. Both forms of thought, subjectivity and objectivity are conceptual-projectional, although they differ in attitude and approach to the object. We already said that it is secondary in conceptual-projectional thought whether the specific judgment, the specific reason be scientific, ethical, aesthetical, existential, or irrational.

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<sup>17</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 72. Heidegger refers here to Sartre's preference of existence over essence.



Primary is that man's judgment and the will that wills this judgment remains ultimately as the only bond, as the only project. The word "subjective" is reserved for the dominantly emotional or irrational regard of the object, whereas the word "objective" is applied to the rational approach. Language, however, is not an object, and thus objectivity as well as subjectivity, rationality as well as irrationality do not apply. Objectivity and subjectivity, rationality and irrationality are not independent possibilities; they are mutually related extremities of the same metaphysical position.

Irrationalism is only the weakness and the accomplished failure of rationalism which has become obvious. As such, irrationalism is a rationalism. Irrationalism is an escape from rationalism. This way out, however, does not lead into the open.<sup>18</sup> Instead, it ensnares still more into rationalism.

Rationalism and irrationalism are extremities of the same metaphysical position. Subjectivity and objectivity are mutually related ideal extremities of trans-scandalental metaphysical, conceptual-projectional thought. We are no longer concerned, however, with the possibilities within this metaphysical position, with accounts of possibly more efficient a-scandencies of trans-scandence, with more or most tenable schemata of inference or axiomatic arrangement. Our question now is more crucial: Is all knowledge knowledge about . . .? Is there an alternative to the trans-scandence of conceptual-

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<sup>18</sup>Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 136.





projectional thought? Is there any possibility left at all to apprehend language once objective as well as subjective knowledge and thought about language must be omitted? Is there any thought "prior" to trans-scandental thought?

What is thought? What is knowledge? If thought were a means to gain knowledge, then the result, attained knowledge, must be thoughtless.

Then knowledge must be, according to the image of man as a computer, stored information, at best available for instant re-call. If, however, thought and knowledge are not "predicates", then they can not be categorically discernible from the being of man. Then anything we said against the trans-scandental conception of language also holds for this same conception of thought and knowledge itself. Then the conceptual-projectional thought of thought and knowledge, then thought as reason is merely one kind of thought,<sup>19</sup> namely a trans-scandental metaphysical possibility. Or, to be more exact, then reason or rationalism is not yet--thought, but rather trans-scands thought.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Heidegger holds that the sciences, much to their own advantage and self-preservation, do not think.<sup>21</sup> Then all this reference to proper

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<sup>19</sup>cf., Heidegger, Zur Seinsfrage, p. 9; Vortraege und Aufsaetze, pp. 62f.; Hebel, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup>We may note that Wittgenstein called the rationalistic conception the superficial one. Cf., Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics, The Philosophical Review (January 1965), p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 4.





thought and formal thought and analytic thought--is the trans-scending avoidance of thought.<sup>22</sup> Thus we must ask again: Is there any thought prior to trans-scandental "thought"? What is thought?

What is the concern of thought? If man does not have thought, he cannot think as he pleases, he cannot take thought to be this or that without being mis-taken. But what mis-takes man? His failure to realize that he is ground-less and care? But how can this be his fail when he is already mis-taken, when he already mis-takenly is?

Conceptual-projectional thought sets before, objectifies, explains, proves. Conceptual-projectional thought transcends what does not respond, what is elusive, to this kind of thought. Elusive is what cannot be set before, objectified, explained, proven. Not set before, not objectified, not explained, not proven can be what is categorically indiscernible from the being of man, what is not a "predicate", what is constitutive for the being of man: Seeing, listening, language, thought, being-in-the-world, care (Sorge), at-tunement (Befindlichkeit), etc.<sup>23</sup> We already indicated that the postulation of an "I" or a subject outside language, world, thought, etc. is, although unavoidable for consequent rationality, an absurdity.

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<sup>22</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup>All the existentials from Sein und Zeit could be listed here.



Trans-scandence can only be on the basis of what is trans-scanded. The microscopic investigation of the physiology of the eye rests with seeing, logic with logos. If it is now not our aim to take trans-scandence for somehow "granted" and discuss and advance the possibilities and a-scandencies of trans-scandence, but if our aim is to realize the problematic of trans-scandence, to say something which is in the least relevant to trans-scandence itself, then our concern must center with what permits trans-scandence, with what trans-scandence rests on, with its *conditio sine qua non*: the trans-scanded. However, we saw that it is not the nature of reason that is trans-scanded; rational thought is itself trans-scandental. Our concern can thus no longer center with and self-evidently commence from a "critique" of reason, although the elucidation of the nature, structure, possibility, and limit of "pure" and "practical" reason may well lead beyond itself. Our concern must center with the being of man and what is categorically indiscernible from it, what is constitutive for it. Sein und Zeit is a "critique" of the being of man. Those aspects which are constitutive for, yet categorically indiscernible from the being of man are called "existentials"<sup>24</sup> or "ontological termini".

What is trans-scanded is trans-scanded because it is elusive to conceptual-projectional thought and knowledge. It remains

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<sup>24</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 44f.



elusive as long as we attempt to arrest and corner it. Our best calculated approaches are but reproaches, our delicate maneuver to confront is but an affront. When we willfully set out to say, for instance, what language is, our best conceptions and ideas are but projections and imaginations.

Language is language: indiscernible from the being of man. First and foremost: language is. It is prior to any conception man has of himself. It already always is. If it was not, how could man be? It is only insofar and insofar as it is. We cannot add hereto, only mis-takenly subtract, withdraw. We can only let language be, in presence witness it occur to itself, witness it come into its own, and be taken in, accommodated,<sup>25</sup> to listen, be silent, and maybe speak.

We asked, what else is there but conceptual-projectional thought and knowledge? We can now answer. Thought and knowledge are essentially response and acknowledgement. Conceptual-projectional thought and knowledge transcend response and acknowledgement, however, not to go free, but to respond to and acknowledge in another way, in benumbed servitude, the prevailing metaphysical forces.

We do not intend to corner and overtake language in order to force language into a framework of prevailing preconceptions.<sup>26</sup> This transcendence of language must give way

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<sup>25</sup>cf.: "Language is the house of being." Heidegger, Platon-Humanismus, p. 53. Cf. also ibid., pp. 79, 115.

<sup>26</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 12.







to response to and acknowledgement of the being of language which accommodates and harbours man. Man is not the lord over language, just as he is not the lord over "his" being from which language is indiscernible.

He who wants to prove and demands to have proven that which becomes apparent only insofar as it appears from itself while at the same time hiding itself, does in no way comply to a higher and more stringent criterium of knowledge. He merely counts on a criterium, namely on an inappropriate one. We can respond to what be-comes apparent in appearing in unhiddenness only by pointing it out and hereby assigning us to let that what presents itself, appear in its own unhiddenness.<sup>27</sup>

The aim to respond and acknowledge aims to do justice. It aims to meet the demand of what-is, of the phenomenon, upon man. The answer to the demand is response and re-sponsibility. "Phenomenology" is the attempt to be in this way re-sponsible. Sein und Zeit aims to be a phenomenological ontology.<sup>28</sup> Its thought aims to be not conceptual-projectional but response to what conceptual-projectional thought trans-scands. Its termini are not conceptual-projectional, i.e. reductively explanatory, they are ontological termini, existentials.

An indication that thought is response and acknowledgement, is present in our language itself. Etymologically, "thank" refers us to "thought" and "think". In the German

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<sup>27</sup>Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 134. Cf., also Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 34 - 39.

<sup>28</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 38.



language, this notable relation is guarded even more carefully, although in ordinary language it is here, too, transcended: Next to denken and danken we discover Gedanke, Gedaechtnis, Andacht,<sup>29</sup> Bedacht. Yet, the regard of thought was not and is not determined by the dimension into which these relations point. Instead, thought is conceived from the statement and its aspects.

Thought as response and acknowledgement is neither objective nor subjective, neither rational nor irrational but prior to both complementary possibilities. The responsibility and honesty of this thought does not consist in performing to certain ideas, rules, or preconceptions, but to respond to the phenomenon to the extent that one is accommodated and harboured in it. The aim to acknowledge stands under a sterner discipline and sobriety than objective thought can prescribe, and this precisely because acknowledgement has no other discipline external to itself as guide, model, rule, support. Thought as response to and acknowledgement of the phenomenon is itself the discipline of the phenomenon. The mere aim to be logical or rational or scientific, which does not question and establish an inherited logic or rationality or science but takes it for granted, must head into nominalism and relativism. It may seem the social sciences least realize this "fact": They tend to extrapolate--without shown justification--the concepts

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<sup>29</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, pp. 91 - 95, 102, 125, 157 - 159.





of classical physics, which today do not even hold for all fields of physics, into all spheres of life.<sup>30</sup> The so-called relativity of value systems and cultural frameworks need not be seen as the objective result of the prevailing aim to be scientific; it as well as the urge to petty scientism may also be understood as impotence, as the impotence of nominalism.

Since thought as response and acknowledgement has no standard outside itself, it is constantly endangered. As we already indicated in #8(2), we seldom have the opportunity to respond to the phenomenon unprejudiced. The phenomenon is already somehow. Already it may be disclosed in the mode of everydayness. Already it may be trans-scanded.<sup>31</sup> At this point, in this enlarged context, we may now restate an excerpt which we already quoted earlier: "In, out of, and against this (commonplace apprehension), all genuine understanding, orientation and communication, all rediscovery and new attainment is carried out."<sup>32</sup> Thus, language, and particularly ordinary language, is a constant danger to thought as response.

Furthermore, thought as response and acknowledgement

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<sup>30</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, p. 58.

<sup>31</sup>cf., Martin Heidegger, Vom Wesen der Wahrheit (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1961), pp. 21 - 23.

<sup>32</sup>Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 169. Cf. also ibid. p.15.





receives its limit from a hiddenness.<sup>33</sup> This hiddenness, however, is not the concealment of this or that phenomenon which in time may yet reveal itself, which in due course we may yet come to apprehend. This hiddenness is the secret and wonder that permeates being. If, for instance, language is indiscernible from the being of man, reasons or proofs for its being cannot be provided. Its being remains a secret.<sup>34</sup> This secret is not a limit in a negative sense. Instead, it engraves and brings into its own that which it permeates. The unfathomable is that this ground-less secret encloses and thus upholds and grounds the disclosed.<sup>35</sup> A re-sponsible response guards this secret as its source.

Wittgenstein wrote about "the experience of wondering at the existence of the world", about "the experience of seeing the world as a miracle".<sup>36</sup> He called this experience "my experience par excellence". And he went on to say: "Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition in language, is the existence of language itself".<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>cf., Heidegger, Vom Wesen der Wahrheit, pp. 19 - 21.

<sup>34</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p. 131.

<sup>35</sup>cf., Heisenberg, Wandlungen, pp. 128, 139.

<sup>36</sup>"Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics", The Philosophical Review, January 1965, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



One may be eager to object that Wittgenstein also called these verbal expressions a misuse of language<sup>38</sup> and essentially nonsensical.<sup>39</sup> Our aim is here not to write about Wittgenstein. We may merely take this opportunity to note that Wittgenstein was aware of the "boundaries of language" as well as of the absolute hopelessness of running against them<sup>40</sup>, as well as the "overflow" over words,<sup>41</sup> whereas his confessed followers tend to deny or declare irrelevant anything beyond the boundaries of language and thus the boundaries as well. May we not wonder what an analytical discussion of or the devotion to one or the other preferred fragment comes to fruit when Wittgenstein's experience par excellence is-a priori trans-scanded?

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 8..

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 7.



## #12. MAN IS . . .

With #11 we have to some extent summoned and concluded what has been said so far while at the same time we introduced and tentatively disclosed our intention for the remainder of this thesis: to acknowledge language responsively.

We observed the phenomenological "fact" that language is indiscernible from the being of man. The questioning regard of language refers us to the being of man. We may note that in accordance with this phenomenological "fact", the philosophical approaches to language are indeed, usually implicitly, based on a certain conception of man. Ordinary language philosophy, for instance, presupposes man as man in the mode of everydayness, without, however, questioning this mode or affirming it as a foundation. Would we thus advance towards an apprehension of language if we turned to question explicitly: What is man? Who is man?

There is no shortage of ready answers to this question.

No time has known so much . . . about man as the present. No time has presented its knowledge about man in such a penetrating and captivating way as the present. Hitherto, no time has succeeded to supply this knowledge so quickly and easily as the present. Yet, no time has known less what man is than the





present. For no<sup>1</sup> time has man become so questionable as for our time.

Man is said to be a rational animal, a tool-making animal, a pleasure seeking animal, a symbolizing animal, a social, laughing, crying, cultured animal. If these "definitions" add up to anything, it seems to be this: Man is-- confused, so confused that when he attempts to reduce himself to a modified animal, he misunderstands the animal as well. What is an animal--once our materialistic-mechanical preconceptions are omitted?<sup>2</sup>

The alleged significance of these "definitions" of man rests with the degree to which they succeed to reduce man to a terminus of explanation. The same reductive method which was to "explain" language also dominates here, providing "definitions" of man. We concluded in #11 that the reductive method is conceptual-projectional and therefore trans-scands the being of man. However, just as language cannot be an object for a subject since a subject cannot be outside language, just as language is not a "predicate", so the being of man is neither a "predicate" nor an object for a subject. The reductive answers about man fail us just as the reductive answers about language. We cannot advance towards an apprehension of language if we accept a reductive, conceptual-projectional answer to the question: What is man?

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Heidegger, Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1965), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, pp. 65 - 70; Vortraege und Aufsaetze, p. 274.



Again we may ask: But is there anything else but objective or subjective thought or knowledge about the being of man? Again we may answer: There is the being of man and its responsible acknowledgement. Did one really believe that what man is can be brought home in a nutshell, crammed into a statement or wrapped up in a definition to be consumed, learned, or stored with other information in a central intelligence file? What man is, man is. And only as man is, is he. These "taulologies" are intended to reject the reductive method.

Sein und Zeit is an attempt to responsively analyze the being of man. In Sein und Zeit no attempt is made to complete the "sentence frame" "man is . . ." by filling in explanatory "proposition factors" in order to fill out the definition and thus to fulfil the Babylon of categories and information. Man is. This is a complete sentence. What man is said to be moreover--is a distraction. Man is. Hereto nothing can be added. Everything essential that can possibly be said of man must emerge from this "is". Sein und Zeit attempts to elucidate the structure of this "is", of this "being" (of man), by commencing from the mode of everydayness.<sup>3</sup>

What we have said here does not imply that it is a contradiction if we find in Sein und Zeit or in later works Heidegger's sentences of the form "man is . . .". What man is

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<sup>3</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 16.



here said to be is drawn from the "is" and not added to it or connected by means of it. In this sense these sentences are analytical, although not defining.

. . . the answer to the question of being cannot be contained in an isolated and blind sentence. The answer is not understood in repeating what is stated qua sentence, particularly not when this answer is passed along as a suspended result for the mere information about a "viewpoint" which maybe differs from the method hitherto employed.<sup>4</sup>

One may object that the reductive explanations or definitions are also analytical. But this analysis commences from a conceptual-projectional image of man which, as we have attempted to present, trans-scands the being of man. Sein und Zeit, on the other hand, is an ontological analysis,<sup>5</sup> an existential analysis,<sup>6</sup> an analysis of the "is", of being, which as the rationally trans-scanded is nevertheless founding for any conceptual-projectional thought, just as presence founds the physical time concept although the physical time concept trans-scands presence.

As already indicated in #11, in Sein und Zeit the terminal aspects of the existential analysis of the "(man) is" are called "existentials". We shall now mention three of these existentials, the first two very briefly, the third somewhat more elaborately since we are to refer to it once more in #13.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., par. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., par. 11.







1. Being-in-the-world.<sup>7</sup>

We already indicated several times that the subject-object distinction is a metaphysical one. The world is not a spatio-temporal container in which, among other things, man also is. Man is not at first elsewhere and then takes up a relation to the world.<sup>8</sup>

There is no man outside world or space. Space is neither objective nor subjective, "neither an outer object nor an inner experience".<sup>9</sup> Man without world is not man but a fictitious abstraction. We cannot categorically discern world from man since world is constitutive for the being of man.

Man is in the world, not over and against a world. When man is, he is in the world. Man is only insofar as he is in the world. To say that man is, is to say that world is. What the world would be if man were not, cannot be said. To say that the world is "really" particles in a space-time coordination system is not an explanation; it is a possible description and a highly expedient conception for some branches of physics.

The world is not a sum of empirical facts, nor the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., par. 12 - 18, 69. Cf., Heidegger, Platon/ Humanismus, p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaetze, p. 157.



sum total of empirical facts, nor the sum total of all known and hitherto unknown empirical facts. Instead, each and every and all and all further possible empirical facts presuppose world. Empirical facts do not add to the world but transcend world. The space concept of classical physics is an abstraction that trans-scands the being of man as being-in-the-world. The question about the existence of the world is an unfortunate latecomer since it can only be asked by a person who, being in the world, is.<sup>10</sup> The problem of the existence of the world deserves whoever postulates a fictitious "I" without world.

## 2. Understanding.<sup>11</sup>

Whenever man is, he is always already in the world. If he were not in the world, how could he be man? Whenever man is, world is dis-closed. However, to say that world is dis-closed, is to say that world is understood. Being-in-a-disclosed-world is understanding, understands.

Whenever man is, world is already dis-closed in understanding. How world is dis-closed specifically, how world is understood in particular, whether in the mode of everydayness, trans-scandence, or authenticity, is another, a subsequent question. Reasoning, explaining, conceptualizing, stating, theorizing are derivative modes of this phenomenologically

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<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 202ff.

<sup>11</sup>cf., Ibid., par. 31, 32, 68a.



primary understanding, which is not a kind of knowledge but a fundamental moment of existence.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, this phenomenologically primary understanding must not be mistaken for a starting point or the first stage in a development of or towards man; Sein und Zeit is an ontological analysis, not an anthropology.

Being-in-a-disclosed-world is understanding. A significant and far-reaching implication of this occurrence is this: Epistemology, which attempts to explain how the relationship between man and world can be established and can result in understanding, commences from a phenomenologically untenable position, just as the proof for the existence of the world. If being-in-a-disclosed-world already understands, reason cannot be a means to inter-mediate between world and man.

### 3. At-tunement (Befindlichkeit, Gestimmtsein).<sup>13</sup>

According to prevailing preconceptions, thought is categorically distinct from feelings or emotions. This distinction may further be aggravated by referring thought to rationality, objectivity and clarity, while classifying feelings with subjectivity, irrationality, or vagueness.

Even if we remained within this general preconception,

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<sup>12</sup>cf., Ibid., pp. 147, 150, 336. Cf., also Heidegger, Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, par. 29, 30, 40, 68b.







we would have to acknowledge that feelings may affect thought in extremely different ways, that feelings do not necessarily stand in opposition to thought. On the one side, emotions may inhibit, impair, or rupture rational thought. On the other side, such feelings as confidence, determination, or anticipation may enhance, unify, or guide rational thought (cf. #9). Yet, even this recognition, although it may blur the practical distinction of the two categories, nevertheless affirms them in principle. Even if we admitted that emotions are requisite to motivate or even "move" rational thought, the conception of vague emotions and clear thought may persist.

Is this categorical distinction as such justified? Whenever man is, he is in a dis-closed world. World is dis-closed in understanding--and also in at-tunement.<sup>14</sup> Existence as being-in-the-world is at-tuned understanding. The being-in-a-disclosed-world is at-tuned. We speak of at-tunement since the familiar words "feeling", "mood", or "emotion" because of their psychological-physiological and anti- or irrational connotations do not reach into what phenomenologically is.

At-tunement is constitutive for the being of man.<sup>15</sup>  
At-tunement has already brought existence before itself.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>cf., Ibid., pp. 160, 182.

<sup>15</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>16</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 135.



Because understanding is always tuned,<sup>17</sup> and because at-tunement has already brought existence before itself, is understanding not a mere taking notice or a mere registering, but concerned. Only because man is tuned, can he be affected, can he be assailed by moods, be struck, fear. Sobriety, for instance the sobriety of logic and science--provided logic and science are sober and do not feel omnipotent--is tuned.

. . . the coolness of calculation, even the prosaic sobriety of planning are signs of an at-tunement. Not only this; even reason which considers itself devoid of any emotion, is as reason tuned to the confidence in the logical-mathematical clarity of its principles and rules.<sup>18</sup>

Insofar as man is, is world dis-closed, is tuned understanding. Existence as being-in-the-world is in some way or another dis-closed in tuned understanding: Anxiety discloses world differently than joy or amazement. Man is not at first devoid of "feelings" and then experiences "feelings", just as world is not at first really a constant something which is then "coloured" by emotions and consequently appears to be this or that.

We may now refer to "meaning" which we did not consider as a terminus of language. Just as there is at first no world-less "I" which has then to relate to the world, so there are not at first meaningless things or events which man then

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<sup>17</sup>cf., Ibid., pp. 142, 339.

<sup>18</sup>Martin Heidegger, Was ist das--die Philosophie? (Pfullingen: Guenther Neske, 1963), p. 43. Cf., also Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 138.



furnishes with meanings. If being-in-a-disclosed-world is tuned and understanding, then "meanings" and "values" cannot be distributed by man. The "meanings" and "values" reside in the tuned, understanding dis-closure of existence as being-in-the-world. Previously (#7(2)), we noted that we do not at first hear mere sounds. Now we can support this observation: We cannot hear mere sounds because the world always already is: dis-closed in tuned understanding.<sup>19</sup>

Tuned understanding means. The residence of meaning is not the statement or the usage of words. Instead, statement and usage of words as well as speaking and hearing as such are possible only on the basis of existence as being-in-the-world being dis-closed in tuned understanding.<sup>20</sup> Words issue from tuned dis-closure. They come from afar to grant an abode.

The meaning of words may fail us. The meaning of everything may retreat into meaninglessness and indifference, and the world may threaten to collapse. Or, everything may stand out anew in wonder and awe. However, when the meanings of words thus fail us, then not because we have suddenly forgotten the previous proper uses of words, but because these previous words stand by impotent in the face of the newly

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<sup>19</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 164; Denken, pp. 88f.

<sup>20</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, par. 33, 34; esp. pp. 156, 160, 161.







at-tuned dis-closure of existence as being-in-the-world. Meaning is not an addition to what was first and properly meaningless; meaninglessness is a privation of previous meaning. Meaninglessness is highly at-tuned and as such--once it no longer stubbornly insists on what has by-gone--dis-closing.



### #13. TRAGEDY

If the regard is language, it cannot be the task to pursue language and force it into prevailing preconceptions, to explain language away into something else, to reduce language to its conceivable aspects, to classify and analyse statements, their constituents, and the relations of these constituents. If the regard is language, it must be the aim to let language be, to let language, not man, speak, to hear, listening, from language.<sup>1</sup> The aim is to acknowledge responsibly what is categorically indiscernible: language and the being of man.

Tragedy is a work of language. Tragedy speaks of the being of man. Tragedy is not a willful creation by man, but bears witness. A work of language which bears witness to the being of man, can we still let it be and let it speak so that we may come to hear of language?

Someone may object: What does philosophy have to do with tragedy? However, similarly we could ask: What does philosophy have to do with the statement and its logic, or with ordinary language? Since this is not self-evident

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 12, 19f.



either, where and when has this been ascertained? Or is it up to the artists to settle among themselves what art is, and to the philosophers to arbitrate what philosophy is and is to be?

Philosophy is preoccupied with statement analysis. Yet, as we already indicated, if we merely know what a person does state, we do not necessarily know why he states, or whether he states the right thing, or how he can state. How must a person be, exist, so that he can state? Should this being be so general, empty and self-evident as to be of no concern? Or does each statement issue and receive its significance or insignificance from the mode of at-tuned understanding disclosure of existence as being-in-the-world? Statement analysis trans-scands existential analysis and thus remains without foundation, remains elusive. Or, to say the same generally and simpler: Logic trans-scands logos.

We want to let tragedy be and speak, as a work of language, of the being of man. If tragedy is to belong man, man must let tragedy dure<sup>2</sup>, he must en-dure tragedy. Tragedy is while it dures, while it en-dures. The durance of tragedy is the being of tragedy, its essence. Thus, what tragedy is, is its durance. What tragedy is, must be drawn from its durance; it cannot be provided by conceptual-projectional thought.

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<sup>2</sup>With the words "to dure" or "durance" we attempt to translate more adequately the German words Wesen (essence), Sein (being, existence), waehren (to last)--words essential in Heidegger's philosophy.





The subject's pro-ject upon tragedy does not let tragedy be, it undoes tragedy, extinguishes its durance. The explanatory reductive termini of the subject's project upon tragedy fail the durance of tragedy, trans-scand tragedy--and thus can never say what tragedy is, regardless of how varied the view-points and the considered aspects, regardless of how improved and "a-scandental" the trans-scandental methods. Here, as elsewhere, we must ward off the reduction:

The durance of tragedy is extinguished when man contemptuously projects his assessment upon tragedy. Tragedy is assessed when its objective is said to be "ethical". The reduction of tragedy to "ethical" termini is common: A tragic story tells us what will happen when a person does not . . . Maybe we can even abstract a meaning for possible future use. A so-called tragic hero sacrifices the ethical at one level for the ethical at a higher level. A tragic flaw precipitates tragic consequences. We speak of "fate" when the tragic flaw is too distant, or in its significance hidden from the tragic hero at the moment of its occurrence. In tragedy we even believe to observe the conflict and resolution of principles, ideas, antinomies, the struggle of public law and personal obligation, the incompatibility of duties or ideologies, the atonement of an offence. Yet, however speculative and multiple these termini may be, instead of reaching into the being of tragedy, they trans-late tragedy into an anecdote, an episode, a lesson well taught, a modified morality play.



The duration of tragedy is not less extinguished in  
aesthetical appreciation.

Are we attempting to devalue tragedy? Is not tragedy an important constituent of our cultural heritage, and thus deserves pronounced recommendation and promotion? Has not tragedy continued to be a gratifying and uplifting emotional experience for the educated appreciative theatre goer? Does not the occasional evening performance of tragedy still add the highlight to our otherwise constantly changing civilization?

As to the "emotional experience", we already rejected in #12(3) the categorical distinction of thought and emotions as phenomenologically unsound. The assertion that our understanding is a subsequent articulation of our emotions, that we are first moved and then think, that we are moved to think, that emotions precede thought qua cognition, is even empirically untenable. Moreover, both categories fall short from what-is. Only because a situation is disclosed to us in its significance or gravity, can we be moved and be emotionally involved or interested. Only because existence is already always concerned to be, can man be among things (inter-esse) as well as above things, can man be emotionally unstable as well as stable.

As to the "aesthetical appreciation" of tragedy or art, maybe it remains to be questioned whether not all ad-preciation,



all adding of prizes and values, all evaluation, assessment, ad-praisal, is not already ultimately a hypocritical misunderstanding. "Appreciation" and "appraisal" already imply that a subject has confronted the art object with its conceptual-projectional judgment. Now, the art object is what it is judged to be.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the *durance* has long ceased, or, more likely, has never occurred.

Ethical as well as aesthetical evaluations of tragedy impede the unfolding of the *durance*, of the being of tragedy. We must let tragedy be. We can speak of tragedy only as we are belonged. We may now want to attempt to acknowledge tragedy, however, not without prior warnings:

The following is an attempt, a frail attempt. Partly, because we cannot rely on familiar language, particularly not on the familiar philosophical terminology. Partly, because we doubt whether what tragedy discloses ever can or should be fully named; tragedy itself does not name it but grants it. Partly, because, as previously mentioned, we do no longer receive any coverage or support from an external discipline. With Nietzsche, the death of God and the death of logic coincided as if they were one flesh--although their shadows . . .<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, pp. 99ff.; Holzwege, pp. 93f.

<sup>4</sup>cf., Heidegger, Identitaet und Differenz, pp. 35 - 73.







The impression may arise as if we intended to use tragedy as an example or an illustration for what language "does". Yet, we know that any such use would here be a mis-use.

Finally, we may repeat that the reader must somehow be belonged by what we will attempt to speak of. This is a requisite here as elsewhere: A song is not for the deaf.

As tragedy dures, it is. As tragedy ceases to dure, it collapses, and its ruins can become the objects of ethical or aesthetical interpretation, controversy, appreciation, appraisal. The durance of tragedy is the being of tragedy. The essence of tragedy is its durance. How does tragedy dure?

In Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,<sup>5</sup> Heidegger speaks of the durance of the Greek temple. In part, he says:

Fast-standing, the temple-work discloses a world . . . There are never men and animals, plants and things present and known as unchanging objects in order to provide subsequently and incidentally the suitable environment for the temple which at one day is also added. . . . The temple, fast-standing, first of all gives things their features and men the sight of themselves. This sight remains disclosed as long as the work is a work, as long as the God has not fled from it. (p. 32)

. . . it is a work which lets the God himself abide and thus is itself the God. (p. 32)

Towering in itself, the work discloses a world and holds this world in enduring abide. (p. 33)

As a world dis-closes, all things receive their durance and urgency, their distance and proximity,

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<sup>5</sup>Heidegger, Holzwege, pp. 7 - 68.



their expanse and narrows. . . . The work qua work erects a world. The work upholds the clearing of world. (p. 34)

The work belongs as such solely into that dimension it itself discloses. (p. 30)

The work upsets and breaks up the familiar and violently breaks forth into the awe-ful. (cf. p. 54)<sup>6</sup>

In the fast-standing presence of the temple occurs the truth. (p. 44)

Neither temple nor tragedy are added to the familiar, to the things that are, to the world or time that is. Instead, the durance of tragedy is itself the dimension that sets the range and brings close, that a-ranges and dis-closes, every thing. The abstracted physical dimensions are the trans-gressions, the subsequent ruins of durance. Thus, "the sciences" can never attain and accommodate "the arts", but are their trans-scandalental metaphysical heirs.<sup>7</sup>

Tragedy gathers every thing, holds every thing, a-ranging and dis-closing, into the dimension as which tragedy dures. Man is not the creator of tragedy. Instead, the durance of tragedy accommodates, a-ranging and dis-closing, man. How could man invent that which grants man: durance?<sup>8</sup> The durance of tragedy gives man to himself. The durance of tragedy is the dimension, the being of man. As such, the durance of

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<sup>6</sup>Cf., also Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, pp. 112 - 126.

<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, pp. 50, 195; Denken, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p.120.



tragedy is the occurrence of truth. This occurrence of truth violently outcasts man from any coverage and excuse, and exposes him to and sustains him in truth.<sup>9</sup> This occurrence of truth is incommensurable with propositional correctitude, tenable ways of inference, and non-contradictory conceptual frameworks, although the latter are the timid and useful trans-scandalous, metaphysical heirs of the former. Tragedy, poetry, music . . . is not a statement-substitute about man but is essentially "prior" to any statement. The statement, its analysis and logic, are the ruins of duration.

The duration of tragedy posits man. The essence of man is duration. To ask: What is man? is thus to ask: How does duration dure?

How does duration dure? Duration gathers and joins, a-ranges and dis-closes, fastens and manifests, and thus spends the tuned relations within the dimension duration is. As such, duration grounds. However, this ground is not the ratio of nihil est sine ratione. The ratio itself is the ruin of duration.

The duration that grounds, founds, a-firms and e-stablishes, is itself groundless.<sup>10</sup> That duration within the suspension of any teleology and ratio is, dures, and thus spends

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<sup>9</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 255, lines 12 - 14 of Rilke poem.

<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 185.







world and things, the holy and the limit, is the unfathomable, the abyss.

If man is to be, this abyss must be sustained, not bridged; it must be widened, not closed.<sup>11</sup> Its cleavage must be endured, not overcome. The during abyss must be suffered, and can thus beware man and grant "fate". Yet, our social scientists have long since plotted the abortion of all sufferance.

The sufferance in tragedy is exactly the durance of tragedy. The conception of sufferance in terms of emotions or sensations fails sufferance.<sup>12</sup> Nor is the sufferance in tragedy a punitive consequence of . . . but source.

Sufferance is durance; durance is sufferance. Sufferance tears.<sup>13</sup> Tears tear--and gather. Tragedy tears man violently and thus gathers him carefully. Man is torn and thus gathered by sufferance to be, to dure as cleaving abyss. Durance tears into focus, sobriety, and discipline, in comparison with which any objectivity is turbid, elusive, and disintegrated.

Durance tears. Thus Hoelderlin could speak of "the

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<sup>11</sup>cf., Heidegger, Einfuehrung in die Metaphysik, p.125.

<sup>12</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup>cf., Ibid., p. 27.



violently tearing time"<sup>14</sup> and its tremor. Thus Hoelderlin could say in the annotation to his Oedipus translation:

Nothing remains in the utmost limit of sufferance but the conditions of time or space.<sup>15</sup>

Durance tears into cleavage. Thus Hegel could say:

However, not that life which shrinks from death and secures itself from destruction is the life of "Geist", but that which endures death and sustains itself in death. "Geist" achieves its truth only by finding itself in absolutely torn cleavage. . . . ("Geist") is this might only by facing the negative, by remaining with it. This remaining with the negative is the unfathomable force which turns the negative into being.<sup>16</sup>

Durance is torn cleavage. The cleavage is the wound. The wound burns. The burning wound is aflame, is fire.

Yet, whereas the prophets, for instance, had shied the fire, the terror and consumption of its flame, its burning cleavage; philosophy, it may seem, has tended to be secure from it. In the Allegory of the Cave, the fire is viewed--as light: Man is exposed to light and to shadow, may be blinded by both. Enlightened, man stands in the light of what radiates, shines, illuminates. The supernatural lumen led to the natural lumen, to the light of reason and self-certainty with

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<sup>14</sup>Sophokles Tragoedien, Deutsch von Friedrich Hoelderlin, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Wolfgang Schadewaldt (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bucherei, 1957), pp. 38f.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>16</sup>Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Phaenomenologie des Geistes, (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1952), pp. 29f.



the willed, envisaged conceptual-projectional view or image, plus the fire-place with its social warmth, if not smoke. Finally, the "concept of fire" neither enlightens nor sings but can be overtaken by computers.

However, fire is not merely light. Fire is not merely the satiety of the supernatural or natural lumen which enlightens the spectator and illuminates what can be viewed and subsequently controlled. "Fire is want and satiety."<sup>17</sup> Tragedy is want and satiety: cleavage. Durance is: torn to cleave. Cleavage stands: aflame.

Durance is want (Entzug). Durance dures as want. Want tears into cleavage and sustains cleavage. Want promises what is not yet, what remains out-standing, what approaches man from afar and waits to await man, what hardly belongs man so that man hardly belongs: "fate", future,<sup>18</sup> history.<sup>19</sup> The flame, pointing into this want,<sup>20</sup> is consumption, sacrifice. Durance is want--and as such satiety.

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<sup>17</sup> Heraclitus, Fragment 24; cf., also Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaetze, pp. 275f.

<sup>18</sup> cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 325.

<sup>19</sup> cf., Ibid., p. 385.

<sup>20</sup> cf., Heidegger, Denken, p. 6; Vortraege und Aufsaetze, pp. 135, 136.







Durance is want and satiety. Hereof tragedy speaks.  
Hereof philosophy can maybe no longer speak--as philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>cf., Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 119; Denken, p. 52; Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 83; Was ist das--die Philosophie?, p. 24.



#### #14. LANGUAGE DIS-CLOSES

Tragedy dis-closes: durance is. This does not mean that there is at first tragedy which then later also dis-closes durance. Tragedy dures; the durance of tragedy is its essence.

How does tragedy dure? Tragedy tears into dis-closure and thus grants man as cleaving durance. Tragedy dis-closes world: calls forth from closure and thus spends, gathers and joins, a-ranges, grounds and disciplines the relations within the dimension (templum) as which durance cleaves.

Tragedy, however, is a work of language. As a work of language, tragedy dures. As tragedy, language dures. The durance of language is its essence. Only because language dures, can there be the tenses of language.

How does language dure? Language dures: dis-closing man as being-in-the-world. The dis-closure of this dimension and its structured tuned relations is the work of language.

Language dis-closes. Again, this does not mean that there is at first language which then later also causes dis-closure. Language is dis-closure; language dures, dis-closing. It does not disclose this or that, information or facts, in a



world which already is; it dis-closes existence as being-in-the-world, which all subsequent facts and information presuppose. Tragedy does not add meanings and values to a previous world, powder rooms to our civilization, and edifying, gratifying, self-defying emotional side-trips for the infinitely domesticated rational animal.

Towering in itself, tragedy erects, dis-closes and upholds durance and what its cleavage grants. There is not at first language which is then later used--as a means, after all--to produce a tragedy which then further on and furthermore causes durance to cleave. There is not the language of tragedy on the one side and the somehow related durance (essence) of tragedy on the other. Tragedy, as a work of language, dures; this durance is already dis-closure into cleavage. Tragedy as a work of language, and durance as the being of man are indiscernible; language and the being of man are indiscernible.

Language dis-closes. Furthermore, this does not mean that language always dis-closes as tragedy does. The mode of dis-closure may differ. Tragedy, as a work of art, violently tears and outcasts man from the se-cure domestication and thus carefully gathers him into what foremost is: durance. As such, tragedy is truth (aletheia), and forces us to acknowledge what we ordinarily trans-scand, what ordinary language trans-scands unnoticed: Language dures, dis-closing.





Ordinary language does not dis-close as tragedy does. Yet, it dis-closes. Not merely does it dis-close facts and findings, habits and concerns, objects and dispositions, it dis-closes existence in the mode of everydayness (cf. #8(2)). Again, there is not the ordinary language on the one side and, somehow related, existence in the mode of everydayness on the other. Instead, the prevailing at-tuned understanding of one-self, others, things, world, events, possibilities are dis-closed, provided, traced out and present in ordinary language.

Yet, existence, the during dis-closure itself goes unnoticed in ordinary language. Only what is dis-closed is familiar and steady, it is self-evident and certain, it is reliable and in-finite. We take it for granted, and yet we do not: Who, what should have granted it? It is as a matter of course. We settle among it and busy ourselves with it because we have long since been overtaken by it, because we have never emerged from it. We are so entrenched in this setting of ordinary language that any other dis-closure tends not to reach and overcome us. Instead, it is upheld at a distance as an exception, is as such ad-preciated and thus incorporated into everydayness. Existence in the mode of everydayness is trans-scandence of existence, of during dis-closure, itself. However, this trans-scandence of during dis-closure is itself as "a way of life" dis-closed in ordinary language.

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 167f.



Some things may be so large as to be invisible. The during dis-closure of ordinary language remains itself so en-closed, so uninterruptedly in-finite, as to be unnoticeable. It itself goes unnoticed because everydayness, as dis-closed in ordinary language, is disinclined to, if not fleeing from, the want (Entzug) of cleavage.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as in tragedy, dis-closure is cleavage and want. Thus, as everydayness succeeds to flee the want of cleavage, the dis-closure tends to close, to level, to hide. Its words tend to be no longer tuned, their sound fades, they idle, wither. Yet, they still dis-close, and be it a time of platitudes when everything is surface, equi-valent, equi-distant, equi-certain: foolproof.

We may say, tentatively, the dis-closure of ordinary language, everydayness, is itself too enclosed, too closed, too close, and needs itself to be dis-closed, de-ranged, distanced, in order to become a-ranged, authentic, significant. The cleavage, as which dis-closure is, has to be widened, has to be torn violently against the trend of everydayness, from "idling times",<sup>3</sup> into greater cleavage, into cleaving durance, into want, into awe, into death (finitude). Tragedy dures as such cleavage. "Modern" philosophy has every reason not to speak of art--or, what is ultimately the same, to speak "aesthetically" about art--: it could not stand art, it would be torn.

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<sup>2</sup> cf., Ibid., pp. 188f.

<sup>3</sup> Hoelderlin in Sophokles Tragödien, p. 184.



Cleaving durance is sound (sund). Sound (gesund) language awares and bewares this sound: it sounds the dimension (templum), responsively resounding. Mere sound, however, is song.

Tragedy calls forth from closure. It dis-closes what before was not. It calls forth cleaving durance as the dimension that grants, a-ranges and grounds: man and world, freedom and "fate", history and future, . . . This dimension cleaves as the durance of tragedy.

However, tragedy is a work of language. Language calls forth from closure what before was not: the dimension. Thus, language does primarily not furnish empirically evident things with names or symbols or gather these things under general concepts. Thus, language does primarily not express information or communicate. Naming is not be-naming but calling forth from closure into the dis-closed dimension.<sup>4</sup> What language touches upon, is "brought up", "comes up". Thus it is not only decisive what a language calls forth, but also what it does not call forth. What is not called forth, may be forgotten, may remain enclosed. However also: what it does call forth, may be misleading.

Primarily, language dis-closes dimension. Plants and

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<sup>4</sup>cf., Heidegger, Denken, pp. 84f.; Hebel, p. 25; Holzwege, p. 60.







animals, being without language, are closed.<sup>5</sup> Sound language preserves and intensifies the dimension of dis-closure.<sup>6</sup> Sound language is not a ware, a means, a utensil, sound language bewares insofar as it, calling forth, guards and awares the during dis-closure against closure. The tendency to closure in the form of trans-scandence of durance, namely, is always present.

In #6 - #10 of this thesis we considered commonly suggested terminal explanations of language. We attempted to lay bare the untenability or insufficiency of these termini and the necessity to go beyond them or rather, the necessity to retrace them to their source. Since we primarily considered these termini on their own terms, however, our critique tended to be merely negative. Following #13, we were led to acknowledge the positive phenomenon: language dis-closes. Commencing from this positive phenomenon, a more positive critique of the previous termini seems now also possible. We shall briefly attempt such a positive critique in the remainder of this section (#14).

It would remain phenomenologically untenable to simply say: As tragedy, language adds the dis-closure of a context of meanings and values. Just as there is "at first" no

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<sup>5</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 60; Hoelderlin, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup>cf., Heidegger, Hebel, p. 29.



wordless "I" which then establishes a relationship to a world, so there is "at first" no meaningless world, to which man then adds meanings and values. How could, and from where would man take the meanings and values, and according to what meanings and values would he add them? Furthermore, a "context" is not a mere accumulation. A context is gathered, held together. And it is the cleaving durance of tragedy which calls into being, holds together, weaves and disciplines the relations within the dimension as which durance cleaves. This sentence may appear to be "circular", yet, it intends to speak of what is "spherical".

Tragedy is a work of language. The essence of tragedy is its durance. As tragedy, language calls forth from closure into en-durance what before was not. Durance cleaves: disclosing, granting, a-ranging, founding within the dimension as which durance cleaves: world and man, want and satiety, history and future, at-tunement and understanding, . . .

If tragedy is language, and if the essence of tragedy is its durance, we should expect that valid termini of language reach into the durance of tragedy. Yet, could any of the termini we considered have provided what tragedy dis-closes in cleaving durance? Let us be more specific:

We could preconceive tragedy as a configuration of words or as a system or sub-system of arbitrary symbols. This could be a working definition--depending on the kind of



work we intend to do. Yet, how could such a preconception lead us to the *durance* (essence) of tragedy?

We could preconceive tragedy as a consecutive number of statements. We could analyse these statements, their logic and the meanings of their words. Yet, the "meaning", the *durance*, the *dis-closure* of tragedy is not found in any one word or statement nor in any number of words or statements. It is not to be found in particulars at all. The *during dis-closure* of tragedy is never named. Each "statement" of tragedy weaves into the occurrence of *durance*, and when *durance* *dures*, all "statements" retreat into the background of their source: *durance*.

The essence of tragedy is its *durance*. The particulars of tragedy receive their weight, their "meaning", from the unnamed dimension as which tragedy cleaves in *durance*. *Durance* of tragedy, however, from which all "statements" or particulars of tragedy emerge, is inversely not accessible via the mere analytical explanation or interpretation of particular words or statements--unless the analytical explanation or interpretation itself already emerges from the *durance* of tragedy.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the analytical explanation or interpretation cannot additively lead on to its objective but must presuppose it. Our purely methodological considerations of #4(2)

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<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Holzwege, p. 331.







are herewith confirmed. If we were to approach tragedy from the suggested terminal explanations of language, these termini would not only not reach into the durance of tragedy but would impede the occurrence of durance itself.

The same holds for ordinary language. If the termini cannot reach into the durance of tragedy--although tragedy tears violently into the dis-closing cleavage of durance--how can the termini reach into the durance of ordinary language (everydayness) which itself trans-scands the cleavage of durance and its want in flight or disinclination?

Yet, durance is the essence of language, of language as tragedy as well as of language as ordinary language. Tragedy acknowledges durance, its origin; ordinary language does not. Yet, tragedy as well as ordinary language dis-close. The dimensions they dis-close differ. Each dimension, however, and the relations, the "context", it contains, is dis-closed in at-tuned understanding.

The at-tuned understanding of the dimension is not and need not and cannot be explicitly stated in particular statements or words. Inversely, it can thus not be accessible via a mere analysis of statements or words, nor can it be patched together from a number of such analyses. Instead, the analyses must already presuppose it. Instead, the at-tuned understanding of the dimension is the abode in which man already exists and moves, speaks and hears, cares and overlooks, in which he is already orientated and occupied.



The meanings of words occur in and from that disclosed dimension as which the speaker and possible hearer already are. From the at-tuned understanding of this dimension, dis-closed by language, words in turn issue, language is in turn brought forth. When man speaks, he simply speaks in and from the during dimension as which he exists; he does not choose among the various meanings of words he once "learned" to finally recall the most adequate ones from categorized stock-piles. He minds the particular meanings of words he "learned"--indeed, he never learned such abstractions--as little as he minds his feet and how to place them when he walks. If he be a careful speaker, he will first be a careful listener, listening to the tune of the during dimension, until its "meaning" grows its words.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 161; Sprache, p.254.



## #15. LANGUAGE RESPONDS

We said that language dis-closes the dimension and its manifold relations--the dimension in which man is orientated and occupied, in which he stands and moves, cares and abides--into an at-tuned understanding which any possible subsequent theoretical or propositional reasoning must pre-suppose. We said that the mode of this dis-closure may differ. Ordinary language, for instance, dis-closes everydayness while trans-scending its source, durance. Tragedy, for instance, tears from security, coverage, forgetfulness, from oblivion, into the cleavage of durance and its want and finitude.

There was a time when tragedy as a work of language was not. How was it possible then that man, who was orientated and at home in a different dimension, could write tragedy? If it is true that language dis-closes a specific dimension within which and as which man is to abide, it seems to follow that language exclusively determines what man is, and what man is to be. Yet, a whole range of phenomena as well as some of the assertions of #14 seem to contradict this conclusion. For instance:

If language dis-closes the specific dimension as which





man is to be, what justification do we have to distinguish between more and less essential dis-closures, or between essential and trans-scandalous dis-closures? What justification do we have to assert that what language calls forth may be revealing or misleading? Where is here a standard or even a mere point of reference? Should we not instead hold that, for instance, the contextual dimension dis-closed by public news media is as much and as good a given dimension for man as the dis-closure of tragedy?

We may be inclined to say that at one time man "created" tragedy. We may claim--and could support this claim with good evidence--that whereas for the most part language forms man, there are also those rare yet highly significant occasions when man creatively forms language. We could call on tragedy as an excellent example.

Yet, this reference to man's creativity only begs the question we initially asked. How can man create something anew? How can man create something anew which is moreover significant? What indeed makes a creation significant? Why is not one creation as significant or insignificant or irrelevant as any other? Furthermore: Is tragedy one of man's achievements? Is it left to the creative ability of man to decide what a work of language is to dis-close, what tragedy is to dis-close, what man is to be? Can man, as he pleases, create any new dis-closure? How does man create? Does he create ex nihilo? If man created ex nihilo, was it just a



happy coincidence that one of his creations, tragedy, belonged man so violently as to tear him from oblivion into his "fate", into his essence, into cleaving durance? Again we may ask (cf. #13): How could man invent or create that which grants man: durance?

Repeatedly we have indicated that the essence of language is its durance, the last time at the end of #14 when we said that a careful speaker will first be a careful listener, listening to the during dimension. Thus we may say: language responds.

Only because language responds, do we and can we search for a right or a most adequate word or sentence, do we and can we say which word or sentence is correct and justified even when this word or sentence is new, do we and can we find etymological meanings at times most essential and revealing. Only because language responds, do we and can we aim to speak precisely.<sup>1</sup> Only because language is response, can we distinguish an essential from a deceptive word or work of language. A word or work as such could not prove its identity.<sup>2</sup> Only because language is response, can we say anew what has fallen into oblivion, can we distinguish the cleaving dis-closure of tragedy from the levelling dis-closure of ordinary language,

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<sup>1</sup>cf., Heidegger, Was ist das--die Philosophie?, p.37.

<sup>2</sup>cf., Heidegger, Hoelderlin, p. 35.



can we speak and learn. If learning were the mere recording of stimuli for possible later recall and use, the search for a right or even new word should neither be necessary nor possible.

Again we must observe, however, that language does primarily not respond to empirically evident objects or events. These empirically evident objects and events are by no means "objectively" secure "facts-in-themselves"; they are already re-sponsively dis-closed in their significance or insignificance. The empirical attitude itself is already a transcendental response. Language does not dis-close and moreover respond; language is: responsive dis-closure, dis-closing response. Language dis-closes, but not ex nihilo and not according to the subject's fancy. It dis-closes in response, according to the measure of durance.

A response replies. A response, in order to be appropriate, must first care to attain what is to be responded to. To be legitimate, a response must first stand in question and listen to what speaks and asks. Only thereafter can a response responsively answer, swear. Language responds. To be responsible, man must first listen to what speaks. To call forth into dis-closure responsibly, man must first listen to the call of what calls to be called forth. Only thereafter can language be sworn in, into words.

Language responds and is as such an answer to what







speaks? Are we attempting to explain the familiar language, which we can record and multifariously measure, in terms of a vague second language, in terms of an obscure metalanguage?

We may recall that we abandoned the familiar preconceptions about language. What the "familiar" language, which we can record and measure, essentially is, is thus at least questionable and presumably far from "familiar". We may further recall that we no longer seek a reductive, defining answer about language or man of the type "A is really X". Consequently, we do not attempt to explain a "first" language in terms of a "second". Having turned to an exceptional work of language, to tragedy, for orientation, we noted that the durance of language is its essence. Asking "how does language dure?" we observed that this durance dis-closes the dimension of man's abode. Finally, we noted that the dimension of man's abode is not the coincidental creation of man but is dis-closed in response to the measure of durance.

We are thus led to one of Heidegger's title words which could well be the title of his latest publications: "Das Wesen der Sprache: Die Sprache des Wesens".<sup>3</sup> According to lexicographical precedents we should translate: The essence (being) of language: The language of being (essence). Following Heidegger's own remarks,<sup>4</sup> we may prefer to translate:

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<sup>3</sup>Heidegger, Sprache, pp. 176, 200.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 186, 200 - 202.



Language is essentially the legend of durance. We say "legend", firstly because it relates to Heidegger's "die Sage", secondly because it refers us to "legere" and "legein", and thus to the very gathering which logic presupposes yet transcends. (cf. #9)

Tragedy calls forth into dis-closure; it tears durance to cleave. How can tragedy do this? Not because tragedy is man's whimsical idea, his creation ex nihilo. Instead, tragedy responds to the legend of durance. Tragedy calls forth into dis-closure, and yet it is a disciplined response, listening to the legend of durance, and, bearing witness, leading durance into dis-closure. Tragedy is not man's achievement, on the contrary, it is the work of language, it is the work of the legend of durance which man carried out in responsive obedience. Responding, tragedy dis-closes what calls to be dis-closed.

Language is essentially the legend of durance. Man is: durance dures: the legend of durance speaks. Primarily, not man but the legend of durance speaks.<sup>5</sup> Man responds. "Every word said is already answer."<sup>6</sup> Durance gathers and holds thought into its concern: to dis-close the legend

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<sup>5</sup>cf., Heidegger, Hebel, p. 26; Sprache, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>Heidegger, Sprache, p. 260. Cf., also Heidegger, Sprache, p. 33; Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 190.



of durance into the word, into the work, into the deed, into silence--and thus to guard the dis-closure, and thus to be.<sup>7</sup>

Whenever man is, he is already spoken to, he is already addressed and claimed by the legend of durance. "Existence, noting the call, is bound to the possibility of authenticity."<sup>8</sup> Responding, man follows, seeks, and sounds the promise (spondere = to promise).

Whenever man is, he is already called on--to be. This call lasts. Long since and long hence, man is be-longed by this call. This call lasts--upon man. The legend of durance lasts upon man, at times so heavily that existence attains the weight of a burden, at times so heavily that all hitherto buoyant projects are downcast and negated, at times so heavily that man is called before nothingness and finitude. Counting with P and non-P, conceptual-projectional thought cannot reach into this negation but must trans-scand it: Logic trans-scands logos.

The legend of durance, demanding, lasts upon man. Man cannot but listen, even--and particularly--when he does not want to listen. And man cannot but answer. Man is response to the legend of durance. The answers may differ. Man may not acknowledge the call, flee it. Technocracy is one trans-

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<sup>7</sup>cf., Heidegger, Satz vom Grund, p. 119; Sprache, p.260.

<sup>8</sup>Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 287.







scandalous answer. Man may renounce and disclaim the call. Frivolity, or the subject's insistence on his independence, are also answers. Man may misunderstand the call and aim to abolish it.

Yet, man may also obey the legend of durance. Responsibly, he may attempt to meet its demand "while running the risk that he has little or seldom something to say under this address".<sup>9</sup> Carrying out this responsibility, bringing forth word from what-is, man is dis-closed into the dimension of durance, he is dis-closed to his own being.<sup>10</sup> "To think 'being' means: to respond to the address of one's durance."<sup>11</sup> What thought can accomplish, what man can be, this depends upon how man is at-tuned to the legend of durance.<sup>12</sup>

The legend of durance lasts upon man, thus giving weight, gravity, and meaning to his words. Yet, the legend of durance also lasts upon man as his widest responsibility. It is the task of man to bring forth, to guard, to beware the cleaving dis-closure of durance from obliterating closure, so that its legend may beware man as man. Responsible thought and language responds and dis-closes the legend of durance

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<sup>9</sup>Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 60.

<sup>10</sup>cf., Heidegger, Sprache, p. 196.

<sup>11</sup>Heidegger, Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 182. Cf. also Heidegger, Platon/Humanismus, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup>cf. Heidegger, Sprache, p. 184; Vortraege und Aufsaeetze, p. 182.



and thus guards the being of man.

To insist again and again on responsibility and obedience--this must be outrageous and scandalous, a public offence to a public, east and west, which believes to be free if it only can do and control, overturn and produce, create and recondition what it sees fit. Yet, man is response to the legend of durance, in one way or another. When man trans-scands the legend of durance inconsiderately to mind his own projects and business, he is ir-re-sponsible but therefore not free. Instead, he is possessed and dispersed, driven and moved, by those metaphysical forces which trans-scandentially respond to the legend of durance.

The legend of durance speaks into language; words stem from durance. When the legend of durance submerges in trans-scandence, words are uprooted and appear as arbitrary exchangeable symbols, or coined signs. However, according to the change imposed upon them by the metaphysical forces, they will have repercussions upon man's existence.

Language is constitutive for the being of man insofar as man is essentially response to the essence of language, to the legend of durance. More fully we may realize now that language is essentially not a creation, an achievement, a tool or a means of man. Durance lasts upon man, gathers, tears, acquires words and demands to be brought forth into disclosure. To the extent that man affirms the response as his task, is he historical.



It is one thing to note the occasional performative aspect of statements, another to lay bare, or even at least to indicate, how such a phenomenon is existentially founded. How is it possible that words can perform? How is it possible that a word can oblige? How can man "keep" and "stand for" his word? We call it primitive, magical behaviour when man attempted or attempts to influence things or events with the naming of words. Yet, how is it existentially possible that the "mere word" could or can be taken as a power to "influence"? How is it existentially possible that the extended ir-re-sponsible use of words can have repercussions upon the being of man? How is it existentially--not sociologically or psychologically--possible that language disintegration can correlate with slum conditions? Is this not also a "performative aspect" of language? This is existentially possible because language is essentially not a means but constitutive for the being of man. Because language is constitutive for the being of man, is the "performative aspect of statements" neither a mere aspect nor confined to statements, is language "performative" to a degree that the word "performative" is no longer adequate.

It is one thing to list the various meanings of the Greek word "logos", another to consider wherein these meanings may co-re-pond.<sup>13</sup> How is it possible that one word

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<sup>13</sup>cf. Heidegger, Sprache, p. 237; Vortraege und Aufsaetze, pp. 207 - 229.







could stand for "word", "law", "speech", "language", "ground", "reason", . . . ? Should this ambiguity have been eliminated? Were the Greeks incapable of a more precise articulation of their "basic philosophical concepts"? Or does this "ambiguity" respond to the encompassing phenomenon: Durance lasts, gathers into torn cleavage, calls, demands; its legend speaks; man is to affirm and dis-close its measure--in order to be man? Thus, we could once more listen to Heraclitus, or rather: "It is wise, listening not to me but to the Logos, to acknowledge. . ."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Heraclitus, Fragment 1.



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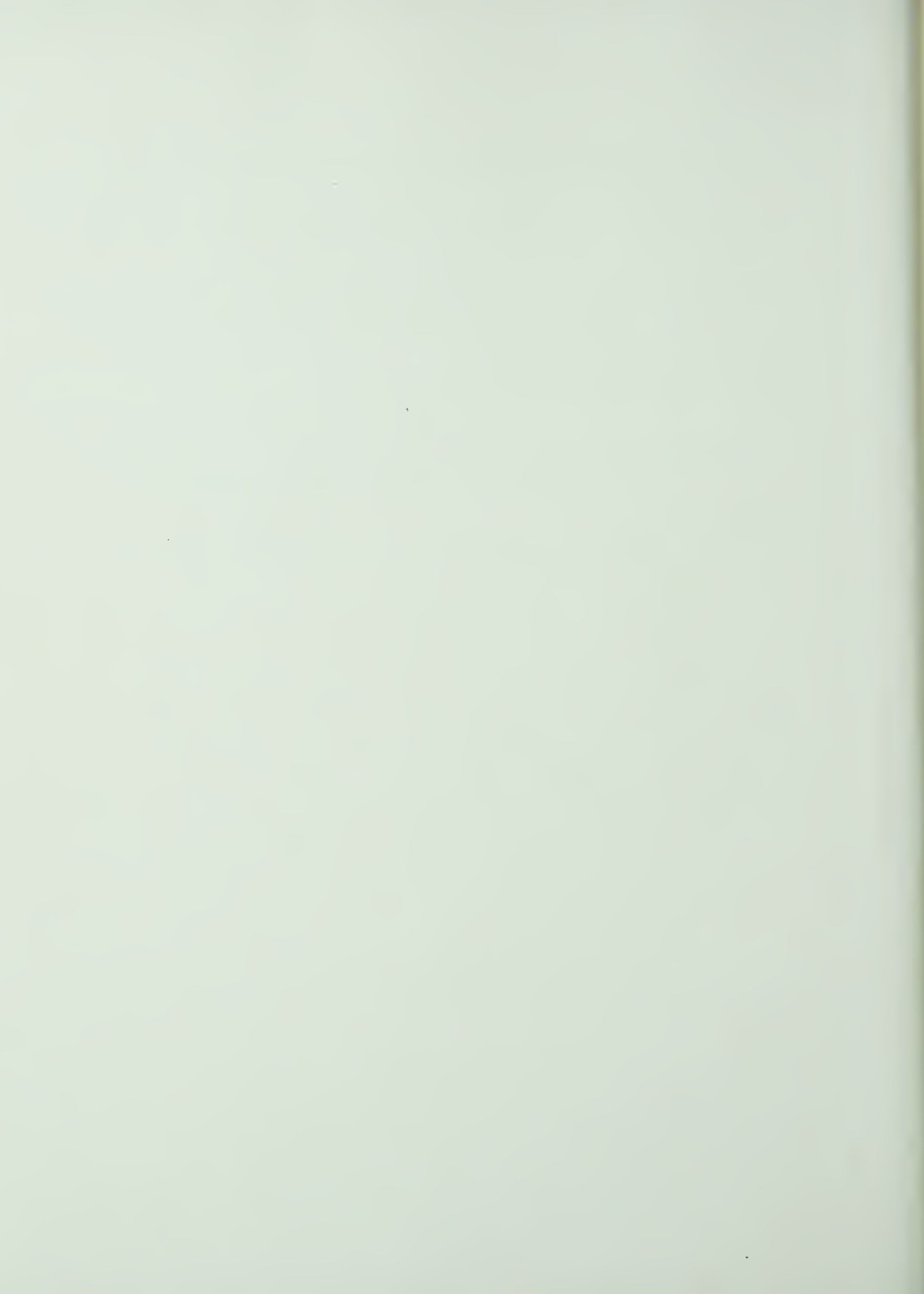
















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